

Environmental Assessment #062-01-144

Canyon Rims Recreation Area
Management Plan

Canyon Rims
Special Recreation Management Area

Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

Moab Field Office

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

CANYON RIMS RECREATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

I. PURPOSE AND NEED

From 1963 to 1966, recreation facilities were constructed in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. This construction was done prior to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and no documentation was ever done for the individual projects, nor for the area as a whole. In 1985, the Grand Resource Area Resource Management Plan directed management “to maintain two developed campgrounds and three developed scenic overlooks” in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. However, some management issues remain, and it is now necessary to formulate a plan to address these issues. In 2002, the Canyon Rims Recreation Area Plan identified several management actions that would resolve the management issues in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. This document assesses the environmental impacts of the actions proposed in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area Plan.

The purpose of the plan is to provide BLM with continuing management guidance for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. The plan proposes (through a Plan Amendment) to change the OHV designation from “open” to “limited to existing roads” for the eastern portion (58,306 acres) of the Planning Area. This would ensure consistency in management, since the western portion (40,656 acres) is limited to existing roads. The Plan Amendment also proposes to manage the Recreation Area to maintain its visual quality by following the objectives for visual resource management (VRM) classes. (Currently, there is a VRM inventory for the Canyon Rims area, but these classes are not in management.) This would have implications for future oil and gas leases issued in areas currently managed as oil and gas leasing Category 1 (open with standard stipulations). Actions addressing these topics are analyzed in this environmental assessment.

The actions analyzed in this EA are undertaken to address the impacts of recreation on the public lands within the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

Conformance with Land Use Plan

The actions changing OHV designation and instituting VRM management classes would require a Plan Amendment to the Grand Resource Area Management Plan. The other actions proposed have been determined to be in conformance with the terms and conditions of the Grand Resource Area Management Plan (July 1985), as required by 43 CFR 1610.5. Relevant objectives of the Grand RMP include: “to accommodate the expanding recreation use while reducing the impacts on the recreation resource base” (p. 16) and “to provide opportunities for ORV use while protecting sensitive resources” (p. 15). In addition, an objective of the Grand RMP is “to keep public lands open for exploration and development of mineral resources while protecting areas with sensitive resource values.”

Consistency With Other Plans

The proposed actions concern issues discussed in the 1996 San Juan County General Plan. The San Juan County policy on public land recreation and tourism is as follows (p. 17): “While the County supports increased recreational activity on public lands, it also feels that federal and state agencies should acknowledge, and more

aggressively address the impacts associated with these decisions. San Juan County supports responsible public land recreation and tourism.”

The 1996 San Juan County General Plan continues, stating (p. 18): “When responding to public land recreation proposals, the County will consider the following:” 1) provision of essential services; 2) impacts on traditional recreation use, such as hiking and/or riding trails; 3) impacts on grazing, mineral development and wildlife; 4) formation of partnerships with agencies; 5) anticipated economic returns. On page 29, the San Juan County general plan states that “the county views recreation and tourism as an additional economic opportunity”.

The 1996 San Juan County General Plan (p. 19) “promotes “multiple-use” management on all non-reserved public lands within the county.” In stating that the County has an abundance of natural resources and beautiful landscapes, the plan says (p. 20): “Sensible conservationism and responsible development of resources will economically enhance and preserve the quality of life which county residents and visitors alike have come to enjoy”.

Issues and Alternatives

The proposed action for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area was posted on the Electronic Notification Bulletin Board (ENBB) on September 13, 2001. This document has also been maintained on the Moab Field Office Internet site on a continual basis. A Federal Register notice of intent to plan was published on June 25, 2002 concerning the proposal. This notice provided for a 30 day comment period for the proposed plan amendment. Native American consultation was initiated on March 10, 2002; five tribes were contacted regarding the proposal. Section Seven consultation was undertaken with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in July of 2002.

Critical Elements

The following Critical Elements are not affected by this proposal: Air Quality, Noxious Weeds, Floodplains, Farmlands, Water Quality, Cultural, Paleontology, Native American Concerns, ACEC’s, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Hazardous and Solid Waste and Environmental Justice.

The following Critical Elements are affected by this proposal, and are discussed in this EA: Threatened and Endangered Plants, Threatened and Endangered Animals, Riparian and Wilderness Values.

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

PROPOSED ACTIONS

There are seven actions analyzed in this EA. They are:

1. Changing the OHV designation from “open” to “limited to existing roads” for the eastern portion of the planning area. This eastern portion encompasses 58,306 acres that were left open to cross country travel by action of the 1985 Grand RMP. (See Map 1). This proposal requires an amendment to the Grand RMP.
2. Managing the planning area to maintain its visual quality following objectives established for visual resource management (VRM) classes in the BLM Visual Resource Management System. This action requires an

amendment to the Grand RMP. This action may in turn affect stipulations for oil and gas leasing, since the standard stipulations for Category 1 leases would be inconsistent with the VRM Classes II and III that have been inventoried within the planning area. (See Maps 2 and 3)

3. Improving the existing footpaths at the Needles and Anticline Overlooks to improve accessibility. This may involve some minor realignment of the existing paths.

4. Adding an accessible picnic area at the Needles Overlook. This picnic area would consist of no more than 5 tables with underlying concrete pads and concrete walkways to the parking area. The picnic area would be located adjacent to the “overflow” parking pad on the south side of Needles Overlook end-of-road loop.

5. Delineating parking areas around Looking Glass Rock and at the end of the Flat Iron Mesa Road.

6. Instituting the following policies to promote recreation use consistent with the objectives of the Canyon Rims Plan:

- a. prohibiting dispersed camping around five developed recreation sites (See Map 4)
- b. prohibiting wood cutting and collecting around five developed recreation sites
- c. allowing no commercial, special, organized or competitive motorized events, except for commercial and special event motorized use on the Flat Iron Mesa Jeep Safari Trail
- d. signing the routes of popular backcountry vehicle routes to better manage visitation
- e. allowing no vending in the planning area

7. Prohibiting the issuance of wood permits within the planning area. (This does not include cutting for ceremonial purposes by Native Americans.)

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under this alternative, OHV policy would not be changed, VRM would not be instituted, footpaths would not be improved for accessibility, the Needles Overlook accessible picnic area would not be built, parking areas around Looking Glass Rock and the Flat Iron Mesa road terminus would not be delineated, recreation policies would not be changed, and wood permits would continue to be issued for the Planning Area. The Recreation Area would continue to be split between two OHV designations and two oil and gas categories; present management policies would continue.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area is located 32 miles south of Moab on U.S. Highway 191. The boundary of the area is defined as the Moab Field Office boundary on the southeast, the rim of Harts Draw on the south and Lockhart Basin on the west, the rim above Hurrah Pass on the north, the Kane Creek Canyon rim on the northeast, and U.S. Highway 191 on the east. The plateau contains 5,142 acres of private land, and is interspersed with 25 sections (or partial sections) managed by the Utah School Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA). SITLA-administered lands in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area total 14,195 acres. The entire area consists of approximately 119,610 acres, of which 100,273 are administered by the Bureau of Land Management. (See Map 1 for boundaries of the affected area.)

Bureau of Land Management administered lands within the following sections would be affected by some or all of the proposed actions:

- T. 27 S., R. 20 E. Sections 34, 35
- T. 27 S., R. 21 E. Sections 8, 9, 15, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34, 35
- T. 27 S., R. 22 E. Section 31
- T. 28 S., R. 20 E. Sections 1, 3, 11, 12, 13, 24
- T. 28 S., R. 21 E. Sections 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36
- T. 28 S., R. 22 E. Sections 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35
- T. 28 S., R. 23 E. Sections 19, 30, 31
- T. 29 S., R. 20 E. Sections 11, 12, 13, 14, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27
- T. 29 S., R. 21 E. Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35
- T. 29 S., R. 22 E. Sections 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35
- T. 29 S., R. 23 E. Sections 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34
- T. 29 ½ S., R. 21 E. Sections 31, 33, 34, 35
- T. 29 ½ S., R. 22 E. Sections 31, 33, 34, 35
- T. 29 ½ S., R. 23 E. Sections 31, 33, 34, 35
- T. 30 S., R. 21 E., Sections 1, 3, 4
- T. 30 S., R. 22 E. Sections 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22
- T. 30 S., R. 23 E., Sections 3, 4, 6

Certain elements of the human environment that are subject to requirements specified in statute, regulation, or executive order must be considered in all EA's along with any other issues of concern. These mandatory critical elements have been considered for this EA (see attached checklist in the Appendix). With the exception of Wilderness and Threatened or Endangered Species, none of the mandatory critical elements would be affected. In particular, Cultural Resources would not be adversely affected by the actions proposed in this EA; cultural resources would benefit from restrictions on cross-country OHV use.

A. VEGETATION AND SOILS

Affected Environment

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area is characterized by sandy soils and rock outcroppings. The vegetation belongs to the warm-to-cool desert shrub and semi-desert vegetative types. The more abundant desert and semi-desert upland species in the planning area are big sage, blackbrush, shadscale, galleta grass, western wheatgrass, Indian ricegrass, sand dropseed, and pinyon and juniper. In protected areas on the north side of Rone Bailey Mesa, relict Douglas fir trees survive, along with plants characteristic of a slightly cooler climate. Hatch Wash, as well as some of its tributaries flowing through the planning unit, is characterized by riparian vegetation such as cottonwood, willow, and riparian grasses. Tamarisk is also present in this stream system.

1. Impacts of the Proposed Actions

The seven proposed actions analyzed in this EA are detailed on pages 2 and 3 under “Proposed Actions”. Proposed Actions #1, #2, #5, #6 and #7 would have impacts upon vegetation and soils; these impacts would benefit vegetation and soils by reducing impacts to them. As Proposed Actions #3 and #4 utilize already developed and disturbed sites, there would be only very minimal impact to vegetation and soils from upgrading already-existing footpaths and constructing an accessible picnic area at an overflow parking area.

Proposed Action #1, changing OHV category from “open” to “limited to existing roads”, would reduce potential impacts to soils and vegetation as cross country travel would be prohibited and motorized vehicles would be limited to already existing roads. This means that fewer plants would be damaged or destroyed by indiscriminate cross country travel, and that soils would not be disturbed by such travel; erosion would be lessened by this travel limitation.

Proposed Action #2, managing for visual quality of the Recreation Area, would have beneficial impacts to soils and vegetation as soils and vegetation constitute much of the scenic value of the area. By managing for visual quality, all projects would have to consider impacts to scenic values; soils and vegetation would thus tend to be preserved.

Proposed Action #5, delineating parking areas, would reduce additional future impacts on the vegetation and soils surrounding two popular destinations, Flat Iron Mesa and Looking Glass Rock. Parking at these two sites is currently uncontrolled, and drivers are parking vehicles further and further from the roadbed, resulting in loss of vegetation and compaction of soils. Delineated parking areas would constrain vehicles to a prescribed area, saving surrounding vegetation and soils from destruction by off-road driving.

Proposed Action #6 promotes recreation use consistent with the objectives for the area. Prohibiting dispersed camping around five developed recreation sites would protect vegetation and soils from further degradation. Under the current lack of restrictions, these camp sites continue to grow in size and receive intense use. New areas of vegetation are destroyed as campsites get ever larger. Vegetation would be protected by prohibiting firewood cutting and gathering around these intensely used sites. Signing certain popular backcountry vehicle routes may prevent off-road travel by helping drivers stay on-route; this would benefit vegetation and soils as vehicles would not drive over and impact previously undisturbed areas.

Proposed Action #7 prohibits the issuance of wood permits in the area. Woodland resources are not very prevalent in the planning area, with pinyon and juniper located mainly along the rims. The relict Douglas fir trees found in the north-facing alcoves of Rone Bailey Mesa are a scarce resource and require protection. Prohibiting the issuance of wood permits would protect those few woodland resources, as well as limit the cross country driving necessary to collect that wood, thus further protecting vegetation and soils. The only nearby community, LaSal, Utah, has access to ample woodland resources on the southern slopes of the LaSal Mountains.

Mitigation

None

2. Impacts of the No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, none of the seven proposed actions would take place. Cross country motorized use would continue to be legal in a large portion of the planning area, and impacts from this activity to vegetation and soils will accumulate as off-road motorized activity increases. (Industry figures and State registration of off-road vehicles show that the numbers of OHV's are increasing throughout the State and the region.) Parking areas would not be delineated at Looking Glass Rock and Flat Iron Mesa, leading to increased indiscriminate driving around these popular features. This would lead to increased destruction of vegetation and soils as drivers seek previously unimpacted spots for camping and/or picnicking

Under the No Action Alternative, recreation policies consistent with the objectives of the Canyon Rims Plan would not be instituted. Dispersed camping and its associated wood collecting would not be prohibited around five popular developed sites. Vegetation and soils would continue to be destroyed by frequent camping use, and trees would continue to be stripped for campfire fuels. Areas of impact would increase as new campsites become established during peak use periods and as previously used sites become so impacted that they are no longer appealing for dispersed camping. This would cause campers to seek new, previously undisturbed sites, thus destroying even greater areas of vegetation, leading to erosion and loss of soil.

Under the No Action Alternative, wood permits would continue to be issued for the Recreation Area. Woodland resources would continue to be cut (including possibly Douglas fir), and the cross country driving associated with wood cutting would also continue, possibly harming surrounding soils and other vegetation.

B. RECREATION

Affected Environment

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area sees moderately heavy recreation use, with over 100,000 visitors per year. Visitors camp in either of the two developed campgrounds and visit one or more of the four developed overlooks by automobile. A smaller number of visitors enjoy a semi-primitive motorized experience by touring the backcountry in four wheel drive vehicles, and occasionally by mountain bike. This backcountry vehicle touring utilizes the extensive system of unpaved routes originally created by the oil and gas and the livestock industries. The Flat Iron Mesa Jeep Safari trail is entirely within the planning area, but it receives relatively little use except for the organized Easter Jeep Safari.

Hiking occurs on two developed hiking trails, the Windwhistle Nature Trail and the Trough Springs Hiking Trail. There is also some use of the Hatch Wash canyon system by hikers and backpackers, including organized school and commercial groups. Dispersed camping occurs occasionally throughout the Recreation Area. By far the most popular recreation activity in the planning area is driving to one of the overlooks, enjoying the wide open spaces on the way, and observing the view from one or more of these overlooks.

1. Impacts of the Proposed Actions

The seven proposed actions analyzed in this EA are detailed on pages 2 and 3 under "Proposed Actions". With the exception of #7 (prohibiting the issuance of wood permits), all actions would have impacts upon recreation; many of these impacts would be beneficial.

Viewing scenic resources is the primary recreation activity in the planning area. Limiting cross country driving (Proposed Action #1) and managing for visual resources (Proposed Action #2) would benefit these scenic resources by preserving the scenery (with its sense of openness) that these visitors have come to see. Limiting cross country driving to existing roads would also benefit those visitors who come to Canyon Rims to hike, backpack and enjoy a semi-primitive motorized experience by driving the backcountry roads. These proposed actions balance the protection of scenic resources while maintaining traditional backcountry travel routes. Thus, visitors would not have their experiences negatively impacted by cross country driving.

Additionally, delineating parking areas (Proposed Action #5) and prohibiting dispersed camping and wood collecting (Proposed Action #6) at certain popular sites would lessen the areas of disturbance that are growing around these popular destinations. Prohibiting motorized events (other than Jeep Safari) and prohibiting vending (Proposed Action #6) will preserve the semi-primitive backcountry experience for which many visitors come to the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. Signing certain popular backcountry vehicle routes (Proposed Action #6) will aid visitors in finding destinations such as the Canyonlands Overlook. These proposed actions would beneficially impact visitors by preserving the scenery and backcountry experience for which visitors seek out the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

The two actions (Proposed Actions #3 and #4) involving construction at the Overlooks will allow those visitors with disabilities to better enjoy the views from the overlooks by improving the footpaths and developing an accessible picnic site. These developments will be at already used and previously developed sites. There will be a brief period of construction during which the Overlooks may not be fully open to the public. This construction period will be scheduled for a light visitation period, so as to impact the fewest number of visitors. Nevertheless, those people who have planned their trip to Canyon Rims for this time period will be negatively affected by these actions.

Mitigation

None

2.Impacts of the No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, none of the seven proposed actions will take place. Cross country motorized use will continue to be legal within the eastern portion of the planning area, and impacts from this activity to vegetation and scenic resources will accumulate as off-road motorized activity increases. (Industry figures and State registration of off-road vehicles show that the numbers of OHV's are increasing throughout the State and the region.)

Under the No Action Alternative, the Recreation Area would not be managed for visual quality. Visual resources would continue to degrade as proposals would not be required to meet VRM Class II and III objectives (see further analysis under "Visual Resources" below). Under this alternative, the Needles and Anticline Overlook footpaths would not be accessible to the public, depriving many citizens of the outstanding views to be seen from these recreation sites. Additionally, the accessible picnic area at the Needles Overlook would not be built; people unable to walk to the existing picnic area would not have the opportunity to picnic at one of the premier viewsites in the state of Utah.

Under the No Action Alternative, areas of disturbance around Looking Glass Rock and the end of the Flat Iron Mesa Road will continue to increase, as people push vehicles further into previously undisturbed areas. Under this alternative, unregulated dispersed camping and wood gathering will continue to occur with some frequency around the overlooks and the developed campsites. Visual resources will continue to gradually degrade as the campsites slowly get larger through use. Increased dispersed camping and wood gathering will lead to further degradation of these popular areas as areas of disturbance increase. Unregulated camping will also impact the experiences of people camped within the campgrounds, as well as those people who wish to use the overlooks for day use because these visitors will have to see and hear the activities of dispersed campers.

Under the No Action Alternative, commercial, special or competitive motorized events could be allowed, which would deleteriously impact the experience of those people enjoying backcountry vehicle touring. Popular backcountry vehicle routes may not be signed, leading to confusion on the part of the public. The quality of the semi-primitive motorized experiences on the many miles of backcountry driving routes would thus be diminished.

C. VISUAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment

The facilities at the Canyon Rims Recreation Area were constructed in the 1960's to enable visitors to enjoy the outstanding scenic views the area has to offer. The landscape is characterized by rolling hills, rock outcroppings, and punctuated by the Hatch Wash and Harts Draw canyon systems. The dominant colors in the landscape are brown, gold, tan, burnt sienna and green. The scenic values within the planning area are of national significance. In addition to the distant views of the mountains, canyons, basins and rock formations, the Recreation Area offers scenic "wide-open spaces" which are becoming increasingly rare today. The scenic values in the Recreation Area are enhanced by its relationship to the visual resources of Canyonlands National Park, clearly visible from each overlook

The Visual Resource Management inventory for the Recreation Area was completed in March of 1998. This inventory found that the Recreation Area was Class II along the rims of the plateau (including Hatch Wash) and Class III in the plateau's interior. Visual Resource Management Classes identify "the degree of alteration that is acceptable within the characteristic landscape." The objective of Management Class II is that changes in any of the basic elements (form, line, color, texture) caused by management activity should not be evident in the characteristic landscape. Contrasts can be seen but must not attract attention. Management Class III objectives state that contrasts to the basic elements caused by management activity are evident, but should remain subordinate to the existing landscape.

The Grand RMP's Record of Decision did not establish VRM management classes for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. The proposed action is to establish VRM management classes that are consistent with the inventory classes described in the above paragraph. This action would require a Plan Amendment to effect. The impacts of the proposed action are detailed below.

1. Impacts of the Proposed Action

The seven proposed actions analyzed in this EA are detailed on pages 2 and 3 under "Proposed Actions". All these proposed actions would have impacts upon visual resources.

Proposed Action #1 would prohibit cross country driving by limiting vehicles to existing roads. The elimination of cross country driving would preserve the visual resource by curtailing the creation of new routes and tracks in the area. This would help maintain the visual quality of the area.

Proposed Action #2 would have the greatest impacts to the maintenance of the visual quality of the Recreation Area. This action calls for managing the planning area to maintain its visual quality following objectives established for visual resource management (VRM) classes. This action would require all proposals to meet the objectives of VRM Class II or VRM Class III, whichever is applicable to the particular area in question. Since Class III management objectives call for contrasts to the basic elements to be evident, but subordinate, and Class II objectives call for contrasts not to attract attention, meeting these objectives would require Category 2 type special stipulations on all future oil and gas leases (see Section D: Oil and Gas Leasing for an explanation of leasing categories).

Category 1 oil and gas stipulations are not sufficient to meet Class II and III management objectives in VRM. Thus, managing for visual resources according to VRM Classes established for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area would require changing Category 1 oil and gas leasing to Category 2. This would involve unleased areas currently managed as Category 1. Currently leased Category 1 leases that expire would be re-offered as Category 2 leases if this change were effected.

Improving the existing footpaths at the Needles and Anticline Overlooks (Proposed Action #3) would result in temporary visual impacts at these overlooks during the period of construction. The new footpaths will utilize the existing ones with very minor realignments when necessary. There will be temporary disruption to visual quality in the immediate area of the footpaths. Afterwards, visual quality should benefit from reduced vegetation trampling as a result of better maintained trails.

Adding an accessible picnic area at the Needles Overlook (Proposed Action #4) would result in temporary visual impacts during the period of construction. This facility is to be built in part of the existing parking lot used for overflow parking. Long-term impacts to the visual resource (by adding artificial forms in the shape of tables) will be minimal, with the addition of up to five picnic tables and accessible walkways to these tables. The construction period for the footpaths and the picnic tables would be scheduled during a period in which visitation is low to impact the fewest number of visitors. However, those visitors who plan their trips to Canyon Rims during the period of construction would be moderately inconvenienced.

Delineating parking areas around Looking Glass Rock and Flat Iron Mesa (Proposed Action #5) would have a beneficial impact to the visual resources of those two areas. Delineating parking areas would decrease random cross country driving, better protect adjacent soils and vegetation and improve visual quality by constraining vehicles to a defined area.

Instituting several responsible recreation policies (Proposed Action #6) would have positive impacts to the visual resources of the Recreation Area. Prohibiting dispersed camping and wood collecting around five popular developed recreation sites would lessen visual impacts to these heavily used areas. This would improve the viewshed of visitors using the overlooks and campsites, as previously disturbed areas would revegetate and trees would not continue to be stripped for firewood.

Prohibiting the issuance of wood permits (Proposed Action #7) within the Recreation Area would have beneficial impacts to the visual resource of the entire area as both live and dead and down trees are left as part of the landscape. Furthermore, prohibiting the issuance of wood permits would lead to less cross country driving; the lasting visual impacts of cross country travel will thus be lessened as the result of this prohibition.

Mitigation

To mitigate the impacts of oil and gas leasing on maintaining the visual resources of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area, future oil and gas leases will be managed as Category 2, with special stipulations to protect the visual and recreational resources of this area. Measures such as natural or artificial screening, painting of all production facilities to blend with the landscape, and other similar practices will be required as necessary by the Federal surface management agency.

Residual Impacts

Managing the Recreation Area to maintain visual quality following objectives for VRM Class II and Class III may impose restrictions on activities on public land within the Planning Area. These restrictions would include requiring Category 2 stipulations on future oil and gas leasing throughout the Recreation Area, including those lands currently in Category 1. This would require amending the current Grand RMP.

2.Impacts of the No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, none of the seven proposed actions will take place. Cross country motorized use will continue to be legal, and destruction of vegetation and soils resulting in impacts to scenic resources will accumulate as off-road motorized activity increases. (Industry figures and State registration of off-road vehicles show that the numbers of OHV's are increasing throughout the State and the region.)

Under the No Action Alternative, the Recreation Area would not be managed for visual quality. Visual resources would continue to degrade as proposals would not be required to meet VRM Class II and III objectives. Oil and gas leasing would continue under Category 1 stipulations, causing further degradation to the visual resources of the area. Under this alternative, the Needles and Anticline Overlook footpaths would not be accessible to the public, depriving many citizens of the outstanding views to be seen from these recreation sites. Additionally, the accessible picnic area at the Needles Overlook would not be built; people unable to walk to the existing picnic area would not have the opportunity to picnic at one of the premier viewsites in the state of Utah.

Under the No Action Alternative, areas of visual disturbance around Looking Glass Rock and the end of the Flat Iron Mesa Road will continue to increase, as people push vehicles further into previously undisturbed areas. Under this alternative, unregulated dispersed camping and wood gathering will continue to occur with some frequency around the overlooks and the developed campsites. Visual resources will continue to gradually degrade as the campsites slowly get larger through use. Increased dispersed camping and wood gathering will lead to further degradation of these popular areas as areas of disturbance increase. Under the No Action Alternative, wood permits would continue to be issued. This will lead to degradation of the visual resources of the Recreation Area, as a sparse cover of live and dead and down trees are removed from the viewscape, and cross country driving to access woodland resources increases to the detriment of the visual resource.

D. OIL AND GAS LEASING

Affected Environment

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area is open for oil and gas leasing (see Map 3). Leases have been issued, and fourteen wells have been drilled. There are ten plugged and abandoned wells, and four temporarily abandoned wells. The first well was drilled in 1957, and the latest well was drilled in 1992. There are no producing oil or gas wells in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area at this time.

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area currently has three oil and gas leasing categories. There are 53,518 acres in Category 1 (Open to leasing with standard stipulations). Of these 53,518 acres, 40,650 acres are already leased, with 12,868 acres not leased in this category. Of these 12,868 unleased Category 1 acres, 5,153 are in the area of wilderness character within the Hatch Wilderness Inventory Unit. (See Map 5 for leased and unleased oil and gas areas).

There are 46,040 acres in Category 2 (Open to leasing with special stipulations). Of the 46,040 acres in this category, 24,344 are currently leased, and 21,696 acres are not leased. There are also 715 acres in Category 3 (Open with no surface occupancy), with 347 of these currently leased and 368 unleased. Category 3 oil and gas leases are found around the developed recreation sites in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area

1. Impacts of the Proposed Action

The seven proposed actions analyzed in this EA are detailed on pages 2 and 3 under “Proposed Actions”. Of these proposed actions, only #2, (Managing the planning area to maintain its visual quality following objectives established for VRM Classes) would have impacts upon oil and gas leasing. Category 1 stipulations are not sufficient to meet VRM Class III, as any changes must remain subordinate to the existing characteristic landscape. As a result of managing for VRM, Category 1 oil and gas leasing would have to change to Category 2, with special stipulations to protect the visual resources of the area. (This would be a result of the Land Use Plan Amendment). This would involve using natural and artificial screening and the painting of all production facilities. Well sites may have to be reoriented or moved to shield production facilities from key observation points. In some cases, off site production facilities (such as centralized tank batteries) would be required to reduce visual impacts. It may be feasible to utilize low profile pumpjacks or shorter production tanks to meet VRM objectives. All of these actions would increase the costs for exploratory drilling and production facilities in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

Mitigation

None

2. Impacts of No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Recreation Area would not be managed to maintain its visual quality following objectives established for visual resource management classes. The oil and gas categories would not be changed to meet VRM Management objectives in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

E. LIVESTOCK GRAZING

Affected Environment

The Recreation Area is used for grazing during the winter months, when visitation is at its lowest.

There are portions of four grazing allotments in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area – Hatch Point, Windwhistle, Lisbon and Kane Springs. Approximately 90% of the Hatch Point Allotment is in the planning area; 1,164 cattle (or 2,455 sheep and 491 cattle) are allowed in the allotment from October 15 to June 15. The Windwhistle Allotment is entirely within the planning area; 167 cattle are allowed from November 1 to February 28. Only 10% of the Kane Springs allotment is within the planning area; 73 cattle are allowed on the entire allotment between November 1 and March 31. Approximately 10% of the Lisbon Allotment is within the planning area; 1,657 cattle are allowed on the entire allotment from November 1 to June 10.

1. Impacts of the Proposed Actions

The seven proposed actions analyzed in this EA are detailed on pages 2 and 3 under “Proposed Actions”. Of these proposed actions, #1 and #5 and #6 would have impacts upon livestock grazing; these impacts would be largely beneficial.

Proposed Action #1, changing OHV category from “open” to “limited to existing roads”, would have beneficial impacts to livestock grazing because fewer plants would be damaged or destroyed by indiscriminate cross country travel, leaving more plants available for graze. Soils would not be disturbed by cross-country travel and thus erosion would be lessened by this travel limitation. If vehicles are limited to existing roads, it will be less likely that stock will be harassed or chased by cross country motorized users, leading to less stress being placed on the livestock.

Proposed Action #5, delineating parking areas, would also result in less indiscriminate cross country driving, benefitting grazing in the same manner as mentioned above. Parking at these two popular sites is currently uncontrolled, and drivers are pushing vehicles further and further, resulting in minor loss of vegetation and compaction of soils. This loss of vegetation and soils results in loss of grazing resources.

Proposed Action #6, instituting responsible recreation policies, would benefit livestock grazing in its prohibition of competitive motorized events, which would possibly be in direct conflict with this resource use. In addition, signing certain popular backcountry vehicle routes, such as that to Canyonlands Overlook, would benefit grazing by keeping visitors on their desired routes, lessening the conflicts with cattle that might result from indiscriminate travel.

Mitigation

None

Residual Impacts

None

2. Impacts of the No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, none of the proposed actions will take place. Cross country motorized use will continue to be legal, and impacts from this activity to grazing will accumulate as off-road motorized activity increases and vegetation and soils continue to be lost. (Industry figures and State registration of off-road vehicles show that the numbers of OHV's are increasing throughout the State and the region.) Parking areas would not be delineated at Looking Glass Rock and Flat Iron Mesa, leading to increased indiscriminate driving around these popular features. This would lead to increased impacts to the vegetation upon which cows graze as drivers use previously unimpacted spots for camping and/or picnicking

Under the No Action Alternative, responsible recreation policies would not be instituted. Competitive motorized events could be authorized, which could lead to the harassment of cattle and destruction of vegetation. Backcountry routes would not be signed, leading to possible conflicts between visitors and livestock as visitors stray from the routes that they wish to travel.

F. WILDLIFE/ENDANGERED PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES

Affected Environment

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area has important wildlife values, providing habitat for many species. More importantly, the large, remote acreages available to wildlife provide a habitat sized to support a wide number and variety of terrestrial species. The wildlife resources of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area cannot be overstated.

The "signature species" of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area is the American pronghorn. Desert bighorn sheep are occasional visitors to the area. Mule deer, cougar and coyotes can also be found throughout the planning area. A long and diverse list of mammals inhabits the Canyon Rims, including jackrabbits, ringtail cats, prairie dogs, badgers, bats and rodents of many sorts. The diversity of species provides a complete food chain.

Birds of many species also utilize the Canyon Rims area. Golden eagles and many types of hawks are commonly seen, while bald eagles are occasional visitors. The riparian reaches of Hatch Wash support amphibians and some small populations of fish.

Threatened, endangered and sensitive species

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area provides possible habitat for several special status species. Almost the entire Recreation Area is critical habitat for the Mexican spotted owl. Peregrine falcons are found in the Recreation Area, as are bald eagles, burrowing owls and ferruginous hawks. Sage grouse are also inhabitants of the planning area. Hatch Wash is possible habitat for the southwestern willow flycatcher. The Recreation Area is habitat for a reptile on the State of Utah sensitive species list. The Recreation Area is also possible habitat for several species of bats, including the Townsend's big-eared bat; it is habitat for the ringtail cat.

A candidate for the sensitive plant species list, *pediomelum aromaticum* var. *Tuhyi*, (Tuhy breadroot) is found in three recorded places within the Recreation Area: around Looking Glass Rock, on the top of Rone Bailey Mesa, and on the south side of the Needles Overlook Road. There are no known endangered plant species in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

1. Impacts of the Proposed Action

The seven proposed actions analyzed in this EA are detailed on pages 2 and 3 under “Proposed Actions”. All these proposed actions except #2 (managing for visual quality) would have impacts upon wildlife; many of these impacts would be beneficial.

Proposed Action #1, changing OHV category from “open” to “limited to existing roads” for 58,306 acres in the eastern portion of the planning area, would have beneficial impacts to wildlife. This change would prohibit cross country travel; motorized vehicles would be limited to already existing roads. This means that fewer plants (upon which wildlife depends) would be damaged or destroyed by indiscriminate cross country travel. There would also be less erosion of soils, which also leads to a loss of vegetation upon which wildlife depends. In addition, wildlife would not be disturbed by motorized activity off existing roads.

Proposed Actions #3 (improving existing footpaths) and #4 (adding an accessible picnic area) would utilize areas already impacted by human activity. The footpaths and overflow parking area to be used for the picnic area were built in the 1960's; the proposed construction would merely improve upon the existing impacted footprint. There will be no impacts to wildlife from these actions.

Proposed Action #5 would delineate parking areas around Looking Glass Rock and at the end of the Flat Iron Mesa Road to prevent random cross country driving. This action would benefit wildlife by restricting vehicle traffic and lessening impacts to vegetation and habitat. Proposed Action #5 would have particular beneficial impacts upon the state sensitive plant species *pediomelum aromaticum* var. *Tuhyi*, as the plant has been documented in the Looking Glass Rock area.

Proposed Action #6 (responsible recreation policies) would have only beneficial or no impacts upon wildlife. Prohibiting wood cutting and collecting around developed recreation sites would lessen disturbance to the land, benefitting wildlife. Less disturbance of wildlife and its habitat would also occur by allowing no further commercial or competitive motorized events. By signing certain popular backcountry vehicle routes, visitors will be more likely to stay on the established routes, lessening impacts to the soils and vegetation upon which wildlife depend.

Proposed Action #7 (no wood permits) would benefit wildlife by lessening disturbance to soils and vegetation. The pursuit of firewood usually involves cross country driving, which is detrimental to the soils and vegetation upon which wildlife depends.

Mitigation

None

2. Impacts of the No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, none of the proposed actions will take place. Cross country motorized use will continue to be legal, and impacts from this activity to vegetation, soils and the wildlife which depend on these resources will accumulate as off-road motorized activity increases. Parking areas would not be delineated at Looking Glass Rock and Flat Iron Mesa, leading to increased indiscriminate driving around these popular features. This would lead to increased impacts to vegetation and soils as drivers seek previously unimpacted spots for camping and/or

picnicking. The impacts of this indiscriminate driving around Looking Glass Rock may further endanger the state sensitive species, *pedoimelum aromaticum var. tuhyi*, which is found at this location.

Under the No Action Alternative, responsible recreation policies would not be instituted. Dispersed camping and its associated wood collecting would not be prohibited around five popular developed sites. Wildlife would continue to be impacted by the disturbance of frequent camping use. Areas of potential disturbance to wildlife would increase as new campsites become established during peak use periods and as previously used sites become so impacted that they are no longer appealing for dispersed camping.

Under the No Action Alternative, wood permits would continue to be issued for the Recreation Area. Woodland resources would continue to be cut (including possibly Douglas fir), and the cross country driving associated with wood cutting would also continue, destroying more vegetation to the detriment of wildlife.

G. WILDERNESS VALUES

Affected Environment

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area contains no Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's). The *1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory* documented two areas with wilderness character that are located in the Recreation Area.. The Canyon Rims Recreation Area boundary includes 1,460 acres of the Harts Point Wilderness Inventory Area that were found to have wilderness character.

The Hatch Wash Wilderness Inventory Unit is located entirely within the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. There are 11,453 acres within the Hatch Wash Wilderness Inventory Area that were found to have wilderness character. (*1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory*)

In addition to the Hatch Wash and Harts Point Wilderness Inventory Areas, there are three areas within the Canyon Rims Recreation Area that have been identified by the Utah Wilderness Coalition (UWC) for wilderness designation, and for which legislation has been introduced into Congress (H.R. 1613 and S. 786). These areas include parts of the Harts Point, Hatch Wash and Lockhart Basin UWC proposals. These three areas were inventoried by the BLM in the late 1970's and early 1980's. The actions proposed in this Environmental Assessment will not adversely affect the presence or absence of wilderness character in any of the lands proposed for wilderness status by the UWC.

1. Impacts of Proposed Action

The seven proposed actions analyzed in this EA are detailed on pages 2 and 3 under "Proposed Actions". Proposed Actions #1 (changing OHV designation), #2 (VRM Management), #6 (Responsible recreation policies) and #7 (prohibiting the issuance of wood permits) would have impacts upon wilderness values; these impacts would be beneficial. Proposed Actions #3, #4 and #5 would not occur in areas with wilderness concerns.

Proposed Action #1, changing OHV category from "open" to "limited to existing roads" for 58,306 acres in the eastern portion of the planning area would have beneficial impacts to the wilderness values of the Hatch Wash Wilderness Inventory Area, as well as to the potential wilderness values of the Hatch Wash

UWC area. This change would prohibit cross country travel; motorized vehicles would be limited to already existing roads. This would lessen the impacts of man upon the natural environment, as vehicles could no longer form new tracks upon previously untravelled lands. The opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be enhanced by limiting vehicles to existing roads for the Hatch Point Wilderness Inventory Area.

Proposed Action #2, managing the planning area to maintain its visual quality following objectives established for visual resource management classes would not negatively impact wilderness values. Changes to the basic elements caused by management activity would not be evident in the landscape in Category II, and would remain subordinate to the existing landscape in Class III. This management action would, all things being equal, lessen the impacts of man to the natural environment, as there would be limits on the changes that could be made by management activity.

Proposed Action #6, instituting responsible recreation policies, could have impacts upon wilderness values if displaced campers seek campsites within areas with wilderness character. The camping restriction zones are adjacent to the Harts Point and Hatch Wash Wilderness Inventory Units, and to the Lockhart UWC area. By signing certain popular backcountry vehicle routes (such as the one to Canyonlands Overlook within the Lockhart UWC area), visitors will be more likely to stay on the routes and impacts to the land would be lessened.

Proposed Action #7 (prohibiting the issuance of wood permits) would have beneficial effects upon wilderness values as the likelihood of cross country driving (increasing the imprint of man) in pursuit of firewood would be lessened. In addition, woodcutting in the Harts Point and Hatch Wash Wilderness Inventory Units would be prohibited by this proposed action; this would enhance natural values and opportunities for solitude, thus preserving wilderness character.

None of the above actions would disqualify either the Harts Point or Hatch Wash Wilderness Inventory Units from consideration as a Wilderness Study Area.

Mitigation

None

2. Impacts of No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, none of the seven proposed actions will take place. Cross country motorized use will continue to be legal, and impacts from this activity to wilderness values will accumulate as off-road motorized activity increases. Naturalness will continue to be compromised by unrestricted cross country driving, and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation will be lessened. (Industry figures and State registration of off-road vehicles show that the numbers of OHV's are increasing throughout the State and the region.)

Under the No Action Alternative, the Recreation Area would not be managed for visual quality. Visual resources would continue to degrade as proposals would not be required to meet VRM Class II and III objectives. This could affect the naturalness of the Wilderness Inventory Units located within the planning area, as well as the UWC areas that may have wilderness character.

Under the No Action Alternative, areas of disturbance around Looking Glass Rock and the end of the Flat Iron Mesa Road will continue to increase, as people push vehicles further into previously undisturbed areas. Under

this alternative, unregulated dispersed camping and wood gathering will continue to occur with some frequency around the overlooks and the developed campsites. This would affect the naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude in both the Harts Point and Hatch Wash Wilderness Inventory Units, as dispersed camping and wood gathering were pushed further into those units. Naturalness will continue to gradually degrade as the campsites slowly get larger through use. Increased dispersed camping and wood gathering will lead to further degradation of these popular areas as areas of disturbance increase.

Under the No Action Alternative, commercial, special or competitive motorized events could be allowed, which would impact the opportunities for solitude and primitive forms of recreation during these events. If these events occurred off road, they may also impact the natural character of the Wilderness Inventory Areas, and any UWC areas as well. Popular backcountry vehicle routes would not be signed, leading to confusion on the part of the public, and possible vehicular incursion into the Wilderness Inventory Units, thus affecting their naturalness.

Under the No Action Alternative, wood permits would continue to be issued in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area, resulting in increased cross country driving in pursuit of firewood. This cross country driving and wood cutting could occur within the Hatch Wash and Harts Point Wilderness Inventory Units, (as well as within UWC areas that may have wilderness character) negatively affecting their naturalness, opportunities for solitude and vegetative cover.

In conclusion, the actions anticipated under the No Action Alternative could disqualify portions of the two Wilderness Inventory Units (and UWC areas) from consideration as Wilderness Study Areas.

H. RIPARIAN

Affected Environment

The majority of riparian resources found within the Canyon Rims Recreation Area are associated with Hatch Wash and its tributary canyons. Hatch Wash is a major canyon system which supports rich native riparian communities such as cottonwoods, willows, and mesic grasses (bulrush, rush, saltgrass), as well as dense stands of exotic tamarisk.. Hatch Wash flows north into Kane Creek, a tributary of the Colorado River. Within the Recreation Area, numerous side canyons exist along Hatch Wash including Windwhistle Draw, Goodman Canyon, Hatch Ranch Canyon, Little Water Canyon, Three Mile Canyon, West Coyote Canyon and Trout Water Canyon. Many of these side canyons support scattered native or exotic riparian vegetation.

The Recreation Area also contains Trough Springs Canyon and Muleshoe Canyon, tributaries of Kane Creek. These canyons support mature cottonwoods and other forms of riparian vegetation. Isolated cottonwoods can be found around the border of the Recreation Area boundary in canyon drainages, and tamarisk exists within many reservoirs scattered within the area.

There are at least nineteen springs located within the Recreation Area, including Trough Springs and Trout Springs.

Riparian resource conditions within the Recreation Area are rated as Properly Functioning. The major canyon areas support mature and diverse riparian vegetation important to visual, recreational and wildlife values. Vehicle access in most of the riparian areas is limited by steep canyons and dense vegetation. Hatch Wash contains

remnants of an old mining road near its junction with Kane Creek. These road remnants are largely located within upland terraces; the wash is otherwise undisturbed. Many of the riparian canyons provide access for recreational hiking, backpacking, wildlife viewing, photography and hunting, as well as supporting livestock grazing.

Hatch Wash has not been studied for Wild and Scenic River status as part of this Environmental Assessment. However, nothing proposed in this document will alter the potential of Hatch Wash's consideration as a Wild and Scenic river segment. Future Land Use Planning efforts will address Wild and Scenic River status for the Moab Field Office.

1. Impacts of Proposed Action

The seven proposed actions analyzed in this EA are detailed on pages 2 and 3 under "Proposed Actions". Proposed Actions #1 (changing OHV designation), #2 (VRM Management), #6 (Responsible recreation policies) and #7 (prohibiting the issuance of wood permits) would potentially impact riparian and water resources by improving or maintaining current conditions. Proposed Actions #3, #4 and #5 would not occur in riparian areas, nor in areas located near springs.

Proposed Action #1 proposes revising OHV designation in the eastern portion of the area from "Open" to "Limited to Existing Roads." Hatch Wash and its tributaries are currently "Open" to cross country vehicle use (there are 58,306 acres that are currently open to cross country vehicle use). Limiting OHV use to existing roads would benefit riparian and water resources by reducing potential vehicle disturbance to vegetation along stream corridors, stabilizing stream channels, promoting riparian extent and diversity, and improving water quality by reducing erosion, sedimentation and turbidity. Scenic qualities and visual resources associated with greenbelt recreational activities (photography, hiking, wildlife viewing) would be improved with increased vegetation for shade and improved stream conditions. Wildlife habitat, including aquatic habitat, would improve with increased vegetation for nesting and forage habitat, and thermal protection. Recreational OHV use and access (including hunting) within riparian systems would be maintained on those roads already in existence. Limiting OHV use to existing roads would also help promote mature tree growth.

Proposed Action #2 would require the Recreation Area to be managed according to VRM objectives. The Recreation Area has been inventoried for visual resources and is in Classes II and III. The limitation of OHV use to existing roads, as discussed above, would help promote mature trees which add contrast and color to the stark environment of the upland plateau. Management of other actions to meet VRM objectives, such as oil and gas development, are complimentary to riparian and water resources and may provide additional limitations to avoid disturbance to existing riparian vegetation.

Proposed Action #6 would prohibit dispersed camping around developed recreation sites, and prohibit wood cutting at these sites. This proposal would protect riparian and associated wildlife values which are located near existing campgrounds such as at Windwhistle. Camping and fuelwood collection can reduce the extent and vigor of scattered cottonwoods and willows which provide valuable shade and habitat. Additionally, Proposed Action #6 would eliminate commercial, special, organized or competitive motorized events which would alleviate potential OHV disturbances to vegetation and resulting sedimentation often concentrated in riparian and stream corridors.

Proposed Action #7 would prohibit the issuance of wood permits within the planning area. This action would protect riparian and water resources from disturbance since riparian trees are often cut for fuelwood sources.

Mitigation

None

2. Impacts of No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, none of the seven proposed actions will take place. Cross country motorized use will continue to be legal, and potential disturbances from this activity to riparian vegetation, channel substrates and stream habitats would continue. Industry figures and State registration of off-road vehicles indicate OHV use is increasing throughout the State and the region. Additionally, the Recreation Area would not be managed for VRM objectives which are complementary to protection of riparian resources.

Under the No Action Alternative, responsible recreation policies would not be instituted. Dispersed camping and its associated potential wood collection within riparian resources would not be prohibited around five popular developed sites. Riparian habitat could continue to be destroyed by camping use, and trees would continue to be stripped for campfire fuels. Similarly, under the No Action Alternative, wood permits would continue to be issued for the Recreation Area with continued loss of riparian vegetation, vigor and associated wildlife habitat and scenic values. Commercial, special, organized or competitive motorized events would be considered under the No Action Alternative, jeopardizing riparian and stream corridor resources where routes are often requested.

I. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment

The cultures which have inhabited the Canyon Rims area over the past 12,000 years include the Paleo-Indians, Archaic, Ancestral Puebloan, Fremont, Numic and Euro-American cultures. Archaeological studies in the area have contributed to the knowledge of these people and an understanding of our past. The following cultural history does not describe specific prehistoric sites, but gives a coherent interpretation of the cultures which used the Colorado Plateau.

The earliest period of human occupation within the area is the Paleo-Indian culture which dates from approximately 12,500 to 8,000 years ago. Sites have been classified as Paleo-Indian if they contain distinctive fluted points although no association with extinct megafauna has yet been found in Utah. These points were used in the hunting of large, now-extinct forms of mammals such as mammoth and bison. Although few in number, the known distribution of fluted points in Utah is widespread and includes the Moab area.

The next period of occupation is known as the Archaic period which dates from 8,000 to 2,000 years ago. The Archaic culture is recognized as being largely nomadic, with seasonal rounds during which diverse animal and plant species were exploited over an extensive area as a particular food source became available. An Archaic presence in this area is manifested by Barrier Canyon Style rock art panels and Archaic campsites, caves, and rock shelters. These hunters and gatherers may have developed into or affected the Formative cultures of the northern Colorado Plateau region.

The Formative period (A.D. 1 to 1300) includes both the Ancestral Puebloan (Anasazi) and Fremont cultures. There are some rock shelters and campsites with Pueblo potsherds scattered within the Planning Area. Known as Basketmaker (II and III), the earliest Ancestral Puebloan stage peoples experienced a fundamental economic shift from hunting and gathering to agricultural food production. Technological innovations including food storage pits, milling stones, pit house architecture and pottery characterize this stage. Accompanied by the rise of village settlements, population density of the Colorado Plateau increased. The succeeding period termed Pueblo (I-III) saw developments in social-religious aspects of life, changes in their technology and subsistence economy as evidenced by architecture, the introduction of new crops and improved agricultural methods. By about A. D. 1275 the Ancestral Puebloan peoples had abandoned Southeastern Utah.

The Fremont resided north of the Ancestral Pueblos (Anasazi) in central and northern Utah. Although more mobile than the Anasazi groups, the Fremont culture resembled Basketmaker III or Pueblo I developments. The San Rafael Fremont remains include pit houses, masonry rooms and storage structures. Widely scattered storage features suggest that farm plots were widely distributed to compensate for the highly localized nature of summer rainfall. For the Fremont peoples, hunting and gathering continued to supplement their agricultural activities.

Protohistoric Ute (A.D. 1400-1850) presence in the region is established on the basis of petroglyphs, unique brownware potsherds, remains of wooden wickiup structures, and ethnohistoric records. The Ute subsistence strategies included seasonal rounds that exploited available resources in a variety of micro-ecosystems. Aboriginal territories encompassed the Green and Colorado River basins until the coming of the Euroamericans in the late 1700s.

Euro-American use of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area has been primarily associated with ranching, transportation, and mining. Spanish and Mexican explorers and users of the Old Spanish Trail likely skirted the area in the late 1700's and early 1800's. Similarly, early fur trappers may have crossed the area in the 1830's and 1840's, since inscriptions are found in the region. The earliest Euro-Americans known to have entered what is now the planning unit were the members of the 1859 Macomb military expedition, who were seeking the confluence of the Green and the Grand Rivers. Since that time, the area has seen livestock grazing and some mineral exploration and production, and recovery of rocket boosters in the early 1960's from Green River missile tests, with very little permanent occupancy. Historic structures in the area include several line cabins, corrals and constructed livestock trails.

1. Impacts of the Proposed Actions

The seven proposed actions analyzed in this EA are detailed on pages 2 and 3 under "Proposed Actions." Of these proposed actions, #1, #5 and #6 would have beneficial impacts on cultural resources.

Proposed Action #1, changing OHV category from "open" to "limited to existing roads", would have beneficial impacts to cultural resources because indiscriminate cross country travel would be disallowed. By limiting travel to existing roads, cultural resources would be less likely to be disturbed.

Proposed Action #5, delineating parking areas, would also result in less indiscriminate cross country driving, benefitting cultural resources in the same manner as mentioned above. Parking at these two popular sites is currently uncontrolled, and drivers are pushing vehicles further and further, possibly resulting in the disturbance of cultural resources.

Proposed Action #6, instituting responsible recreation policies, would benefit cultural resources by restricting backcountry drivers to the desired vehicle route, therefore lessening the impacts to cultural resources. The prohibition of dispersed camping around developed recreation sites would also lessen the impact to cultural resources from this activity.

Two of the proposed actions (#3 and #4) call for the improvement of existing footpaths at the Needles and Anticline Overlooks and the building of a handicapped accessible picnic site at the Needles Overlook. Both of these actions would take place in areas that have been cleared for cultural resources.

Mitigation

None

Residual Impacts

None

2. Impacts of the No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, none of the proposed actions will take place. Cross country motorized use will continue to be legal, and impacts from this activity to cultural resources will accumulate as off-road motorized activity increases. Parking areas would not be delineated, leading to increased indiscriminate driving around these popular features and possible harm to cultural resources. Under the No Action Alternative, responsible recreation policies would not be instituted, leading to the possible destruction of cultural resources from irresponsible recreation use.

IV. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area has seen very few changes since the area was settled in the 1880's. Historically, the area has been used for grazing; this legacy has seen the construction of stock ponds, fences and a few line cabins. From 1957 to 1992, there was some oil and gas exploration, although there is no such activity at the present time. Recreation sites were developed in the 1960's, and have been maintained by the Bureau of Land Management during the intervening years. While the area receives moderate (estimated at 100,000 per year) visitation, the great majority of these visitors drive to one or more of the overlooks and enjoy the view, creating very little impact outside the hardened sites.

The actions proposed in this EA seek to preserve the backcountry character of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. Visitation is expected to increase at a steady pace as visitors move beyond the Moab area in search of open space. By instituting responsible recreation policies now, impacts from increased recreation use can hopefully be lessened. Without these restrictions, impacts associated with wood collecting and dispersed camping will continue to worsen, especially in the most popular sites. Off-road vehicle use in lands surrounding the Recreation Area is expected to increase, perhaps dramatically. Clear direction and policy regarding off-road vehicle use in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area is required in order to lessen the potential impacts of off road vehicle use. By restricting all motorized use to existing roads, impacts to vegetation, soils and scenery from off-road driving will not accumulate to the degree that they might otherwise.

The projects proposed in this EA are very small scale in comparison to the work that has already been done within the Recreation Area. The additional proposed work (delineating parking lots, providing accessible picnic sites and walkways) would result in exceedingly small amounts of new surface disturbance which in all cases will occur at areas already impacted by past recreation use. While site work will result in short-term disturbance, overall, the proposed projects would facilitate public use of the area, while providing additional protective measures to limit damage to soils, vegetation, and scenic quality. This will be accomplished by concentrating recreation use at existing disturbed areas, closing some areas to camping, and drawing use away from undeveloped sites by providing support facilities at managed locations.

The visual quality of the Recreation Area is very high. By managing for VRM Classes, visual quality will be a management objective, and piecemeal impacts to the visual resource will be less likely to accumulate. Oil and gas exploration may increase in the future; the cumulative impacts of this exploration will be mitigated by requiring special stipulations for visual quality in oil and gas leases.

Woodland resources in the Recreation Area are not great, but there has been some wood cutting in the past. This has resulted in the degradation of the visual resource, especially on the rims of the canyons (where most of the wood is located). Furthermore, the cross country driving associated with wood collecting has negatively impacted vegetation and soils. Given the scarcity of forested areas in the Recreation Area, further wood cutting can be expected to continue this degradation as people have to drive further and further off the roads to find wood sources.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Persons and Agencies Consulted

A draft of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area Management Plan was presented in draft form to the San Juan County Commission on December 17, 2001. Discussion centered on the Canyon Rims Plan's consistency with the San Juan County General Plan. San Juan County responded to the draft plan in writing on January 23, 2002.

Section Seven consultation for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area Environmental Assessment was initiated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on July 23, 2002. On August 7, 2002, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the "not likely to adversely affect" determination. In addition, USFWS concurred that the proposed action will not adversely modify or destroy Mexican spotted owl critical habitat

Native American Consultation was initiated on March 10, 2002. Of the five tribes consulted, one, the Hopi Tribe, requested a copy of this Environmental Assessment.

Public Comment Period- Federal Register Notice

Information on the Canyon Rims Recreation Area Recreation Area Management Plan and Environmental Assessment was sent to the Utah State Office for posting on the Utah BLM Environmental Notification Bulletin Board (ENBB) on September 13, 2001. This posting, which included all proposed actions, was maintained for the entire planning period on the Moab Field Office's webpage.

On June 25, 2002, a Notice of Intent to Plan was published in the Federal Register. The notice informed the public that a plan amendment was being considered for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. The issues identified for planning including OHV designation and visual resource management. Comments were accepted for 30 days from the date of publication of the notice.

Press releases were placed in both the Moab and Monticello newspapers seeking input concerning the Canyon Rims Recreation Area planning effort. (Moab Times-Independent, July 4, 2002; San Juan Record, July 8, 2002).

Public Comment and Response- Federal Register Notice

A total of 23 letters were received regarding the Federal Register Notice of Intent to Plan. Sixteen letters were from 24 individuals representing themselves. Six letters were received from individuals representing the following organizations: the San Juan County Commission, Californians for Western Wilderness, the Wasatch Mountain Club, the Wilderness Society, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and the SouthWest Four Wheel Drive Association. The comments received on the Federal Register Notice can be grouped into three categories. 1) Two individuals offered no specific comments, but wished to be placed on the mailing list to receive the plan and forthcoming Environmental Assessment. 2) Five individual letters and two organizations (the San Juan County Commission and the SouthWest Four Wheel Drive Association) generally supported pursuing the issues identified in the Notice. 3) Eight individual letters and four

organizations (Wilderness Society, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, Californians for Western Wilderness and the Wasatch Mountain Club) raised six specific concerns regarding the issues identified.

Comments Pertaining to Issues Identified in the Federal Register Notice

Comment 1. Travel Management --The Canyon Rims Recreation Area Management Plan and Plan Amendment should limit the entire planning area to designated roads.

Response: A purpose of the Canyon Rims Plan Amendment is to achieve consistency in OHV management between the western (“Limited to Existing Roads”) and eastern (“Open”) portions of the planning area. When the Grand Resource Area Resource Management Plan is amended, such issues as travel management will be addressed in a larger context.

Comment 2. Oil and Gas Leasing --The Canyon Rims Recreation Area should be closed to oil and gas leasing in its entirety.

Response: Oil and gas leasing is discussed within the Canyon Rims Recreation Area Management Plan only as a corollary to managing for visual resources. Oil and gas leasing categories is a topic to be addressed in the upcoming revision of the Grand Resource Area Resource Management Plan.

Comment 3. Visual Resource Management – The Canyon Rims Recreation Area should be reinventoried for visual resources.

Response: The Canyon Rims Recreation Area Management Plan accepts the BLM’s current VRM inventory. When the Grand Resource Area Resource Management Plan is revised, discussion concerning VRM inventory classes will be addressed.

Comment 4. Wildlife Management – All management actions should be consistent with the area’s important wildlife habitat.

Response: The Canyon Rims Recreation Area Management Plan recognizes the importance of the planning area as wildlife habitat. No management actions undertaken as part of this plan will have deleterious effects upon wildlife. In addition, the actions proposed will have positive impacts upon wildlife. For example, limiting vehicles to existing roads will provide more space for wildlife by restricting vehicle access to habitat.

Comment 5. Recreation Development – All existing recreation developments currently in the area should be reconsidered and some of them reclaimed.

Response: The Canyon Rims Recreation Area Management Plan seeks to manage the existing recreation developments that were constructed in the 1960's.

Comment 6: Wilderness – All areas proposed for wilderness designation within the planning area should be recognized and protected.

Response: Planning for wilderness is beyond the scope of this planning document. Wilderness issues are expected to be addressed in future planning processes. Nothing proposed in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area Management Plan will impair wilderness values of any of the lands proposed for wilderness within the planning area.

VI. LIST OF PREPARERS

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VII. REFERENCES

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VIII. APPENDICES

Map 1: Existing Vehicle Use Designations
Map 2: Visual Resource Management Inventory Classes
Map 3: Oil and Gas Leasing Categories
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Checklist for EA No. UT-062-01-144
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. Utah Wilderness Inventory. 1999.

Draft: August 19, 2002

Recreation Area

Management Plan

CANYON RIMS RECREATION AREA

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Moab Field Office

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Prepared by: _____
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OVERVIEW

From 1963 to 1966, recreation facilities were constructed in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. The outstanding scenic values of the area were recognized at that time, and facilities were planned so that the public could enjoy the area. The Bureau of Land Management constructed four overlooks, an entrance kiosk, and two campgrounds, and improved the roads to these facilities. This construction was done prior to today's requirements for planning and environmental assessments, and no recreation plan or National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation was ever done for the individual projects, or for the area as a whole. This document is the proposed Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. It is important to remember that, in most cases, the desired facilities already exist. Existing facilities will be identified throughout the plan. This document describes the current management situation and provides long term guidance for the management of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Location and Setting

Planning Area Boundaries

The primary road entrance to the Canyon Rims Recreation Area is located 32 miles south of Moab on U.S. Highway 191. The planning area is defined as the Moab Field Office boundary on the southeast, the rim of Harts Draw on the south and Lockhart Basin on the west, the rim above Hurrah Pass on the north, the Kane Creek Canyon rim on the northeast, and U.S. Highway 191 on the east. The plateau contains some parcels of private land, and is interspersed with 25 sections (or partial sections) managed by the Utah School Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA). This planning document applies only to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered lands within the planning area. (Should private or SITLA land within the planning area be acquired by the BLM, those lands shall be managed according to this plan). See Map 1 for map of the planning area.

Land Ownership and Administration

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area planning unit consists of approximately 119,610 acres. Of these, 100,273 acres are administered by the Bureau of Land Management (83.8%), 14,195 acres by Utah School Institutional Trust Lands Administration (11.8%) and 5,142 acres are in private ownership (4.3%).

Population Centers

Two incorporated cities are located near the planning area. The City of Moab, 32 miles north of the main entrance to the planning area, has a population of 4,900. Monticello is located 14 miles south of this same entrance. Monticello has a population of 1,929. The Canyon Rims Recreation Area receives a moderate amount of visitation (estimated at over 100,000 per year); the great majority of this visitation is from out-of-area visitors.

Physiography

The planning area is part of the Colorado Plateau Physiographic Region which covers 130,000 square miles in Utah, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico. The Plateau has eroded into cliffs, mesas, intricate canyon systems, and natural sandstone outcroppings known for their scenic splendor. The Canyon Rims Recreation Area shares in this scenic splendor. The primary physical features of the planning area are the clifflines that form much of its boundary. It is upon these cliff edges that the popular overlooks are located, and from which much more of the Colorado Plateau Physiographic Region can be viewed. Hatch Wash, a tributary of Kane Creek, has formed a deeply incised canyon within the planning area. Other canyons such as Trout Water and Trough Springs reveal additional layers of geology.

General Access

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area is accessed off U.S. Highway 191. The main access road, which is paved all the way to the Needles Overlook, leaves the highway 32 miles south of Moab. It is 22 miles to Needles Overlook; Windwhistle Campground is located 6 miles from U.S. Highway 191 on this road. The Anticline Overlook is located 31 miles from U.S. Highway 191. Sixteen of those miles are on a graveled, highly improved road. Hatch Point Campground is located 24 miles from U.S. Highway 191 on the Anticline Overlook Road. Canyonlands Overlook is located six miles from the Anticline Road, and Minor Overlook is a short distance from this same road. In addition to these developed roads, many miles of secondary roads exist.

The northern portions of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area are primarily accessed by two secondary roads, the Looking Glass Rock Road and the Flat Iron Mesa Road, both of which exit from U.S. Highway 191. (See Map 1.)

B. Background Information

Preliminary Planning Efforts

Multiple-use management decisions for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area are addressed in the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Grand Resource Area, approved in 1985. This plan was prepared during 1981-83. However, during these times, recreation management was not considered to be a key issue and consequently recreation topics received only cursory attention in the plan. Planning guidance relating to the Canyon Rims Recreation Area contained in Grand RMP is summarized in Section II of this plan.

The name “Canyon Rims Recreation Area” has had several iterations. In the 1960's, the name was used to refer to the Hatch Point area, and improved recreation facilities were constructed there. In the early 1980's, the Bureau of Land Management established Canyon Rims as a Special Recreation Management Area. The boundaries of this Special Recreation Management Area are identical to those identified as “Canyon Rims” in the current planning effort.

During the late 1980's and the 1990's, the name “Canyon Rims” was used to refer to a larger area that also included the Lockhart Basin, Harts Point, Dry Valley, Indian Creek, Beef Basin and Dark Canyon areas. A report resulting from the work of BLM volunteers F.A. and M.M. Barnes investigated this much larger area. They also published a guidebook called “Canyon Country's Canyon Rims Recreation Area” that included the expanded area. For BLM visitor use reporting purpose, this resulted in the Special Recreation Management Area being called “Canyon Rims North” and the other areas listed above being called “Canyon Rims South”.

The current planning document includes only the original area of the Special Recreation Management Area. For simplicity, this shall be referred to as “Canyon Rims Recreation Area”. The other areas mentioned above, at one time known as “Canyon Rims South” are not included in this plan. Due to a reorganization of the Bureau of Land Management’s Utah field offices, these southern areas are no longer under the jurisdiction of the Moab Field Office.

Scope and Focus of the Plan

The scope of the plan is limited to recreation management actions consistent with other management prescriptions contained in the Grand RMP. The focus of this plan is on the management of land-based recreation over a 10-year period.

Recreational Significance of Canyon Rims Recreation Area

Canyon Rims Recreation Area visitors participate in several recreation activities including scenic auto tours, viewing the scenery seen from any or all of the four overlooks, camping at one of the two developed campgrounds, camping in dispersed sites, hiking and backpacking, bicycling, jeeping, all terrain vehicle riding, motorcycle touring, nature study, and jogging. Besides the two main routes, the Canyon Rims Recreation Area contains a network of dirt roads that lead to various points. Several of these see use as Off highway vehicle or mountain bike trails.

BLM-maintained recreation facilities in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area include the Information Kiosk at the Needles Overlook Road and U.S. Highway 191, Windwhistle Campground, Windwhistle Nature Trail (hiking only), Needles Overlook, Hatch Point Campground, Canyonlands Overlook, the Trough Springs Trail (hiking and horseback riding only), Minor Overlook and the Anticline Overlook (See Map 2). Please note that the Entrance Kiosk is actually located in an area administered by the Monticello Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management. However, the Entrance Station is maintained by the Moab Field Office, as it serves the Canyon Rims Recreation Area, which is administered by the Moab Field Office.

C. Resource Overview

Topography

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area is located in the Colorado Plateau physiographic region. The elevation of the planning area is from 4500 feet to 6000 feet above sea level. The Colorado River canyon is seen below the rim from each of the four overlooks. The Hatch Point area is punctuated by large outcroppings of Navajo Sandstone known by such whimsical names as Windwhistle Rock, Rone Bailey Mesa, Soup Rock, Hatch Rock and Eightmile Rock. Hatch Point is characterized especially by the sharp rims that isolate it from the canyonlands below. These rims are especially noteworthy on the southwest, west, north and northeast. It is these sharp rims which provide the outstanding views from the Canyon Rims to the vast river-carved canyons below.

Climate

Recreational use of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area is seasonal in nature. In winter, the weather is cold and snow often remains on the ground. During summer, temperatures reaching 100 degrees Fahrenheit make auto touring (mainly to the Needles Overlook) the focus of recreation activity. As a consequence, the periods of greatest prolonged visitation to the area occur March through June and September through October when activities such as camping, hiking, mountain bicycling, and driving the back roads are popular.

Vegetation

Generally, the vegetation in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area belongs to the warm-to-cool desert shrub and semi-desert vegetative types. The more abundant desert and semi-desert upland species in the planning area are big sage, blackbrush, shadscale, galleta grass, western wheat grass, Indian ricegrass, sand dropseed, and pinyon-juniper.

In protected areas on the north side of Rone Bailey Mesa, relict Douglas fir trees survive, along with plants characteristic of a slightly cooler climate. Hatch Wash, as well as some of its tributaries flowing through the planning unit, is characterized by riparian vegetation such as cottonwood, willow and riparian grasses. Tamarisk is also present in this stream system.

Water

Water resources within the planning area include Hatch Wash, a canyon with a permanent stream. Trough Springs Canyon (a tributary of Kane Creek) also contains water. Drinking water is available from a well at Windwhistle Campground. This well and its pump are maintained by the Bureau of Land Management, and the well supplies the campground with drinking water. There are numerous stock ponds in the area that provide water to cattle and wildlife.

Wildlife

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area has significant wildlife values, providing habitat for several endangered and special status species. Perhaps even more importantly, the large, remote acreages available to wildlife in the planning area provide the habitat to support a wide variety of terrestrial species. This excellent wildlife habitat supports a sustainable watchable wildlife program site as well as hunting opportunities in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

The “signature species” of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area is the American pronghorn. These animals are often spotted from the main roads in the area. Desert bighorn sheep are occasional visitors to the planning area. Mule deer, cougar and coyotes can also be found throughout the area. A long and

diverse list of mammals inhabits the Canyon Rims, including jackrabbits, ringtail cats, badgers, bats, and rodents of many sorts. The diversity of species provides a complete food chain.

Birds of many species also utilize the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. Golden eagles and many types of hawks (including the ferruginous hawk) are commonly seen, while bald eagles are occasional visitors. Peregrine falcons are found in the Recreation Area, and it is critical habitat for the Mexican Spotted Owl. Burrowing owls may be found; sage grouse are also inhabitants of the planning area

There is a developing concern for bird species that nest in North America and winter in Latin America (neo-tropical migrants), because many of these birds are declining in number. The riparian vegetation found in Hatch Wash is valuable for these birds, both during migration and for nesting. Hatch Wash also provides possible habitat for southwestern willow flycatchers.

The Recreation Area is also excellent habitat for many types of reptiles, including one on the sensitive species list. The riparian reaches of Hatch Wash support amphibians and some small populations of fish. The Townsend's big-eared bat forages in the area.

In summary, the Canyon Rims Recreation Area provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. Large, remote pieces of habitat are becoming increasingly rare. The wildlife resources of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area cannot be overstated.

Cultural Resources

The cultures which have inhabited the Canyon Rims area over the past 12,000 years include the Paleo-Indians, Archaic, Ancestral Puebloan, Fremont, Numic and Euro-American cultures. Archaeological studies in the area have contributed to the knowledge of these people and an understanding of our past. The following cultural history does not describe specific prehistoric sites, but gives a coherent interpretation of the cultures which used the Colorado Plateau follows.

The earliest period of human occupation within the area is the Paleo-Indian culture which dates from approximately 12,500 to 8,000 years ago. Sites have been classified as Paleo-Indian if they contain distinctive fluted points although no association with extinct megafauna has yet been found in Utah. These points were used in the hunting of large, now-extinct forms of mammals such as mammoth and bison. The known distribution of fluted points in Utah is rare, but widespread, including the Moab area.

The next period of occupation is known as the Archaic period which dates from 8,000 to 2,000 years ago. The Archaic culture is recognized as being largely nomadic, with seasonal rounds during which diverse animal and plant species were exploited over an extensive area as a particular food source became available. An Archaic presence in this area is manifested by Barrier Canyon Style rock art panels and Archaic campsites, caves, and rock shelters. These hunters and gatherers may have developed into or affected the Formative cultures of the northern Colorado Plateau region.

The Formative period (A.D. 1 to 1300) includes both the Ancestral Puebloan (Anasazi) and Fremont cultures. There are some rock shelters and campsites with Pueblo potsherds scattered within the Planning Area. The earliest Ancestral Puebloan stage is known as Basketmaker (II and III) which experienced a fundamental economic shift to agricultural food production. Technological innovations including food storage pits, milling stones, pit house architecture and pottery characterize this stage. Accompanied by the rise of village settlements, population density of the Colorado Plateau increased. The succeeding period termed Pueblo (I-III) saw developments in social-religious aspects of life, technology and subsistence economy as evidenced by architecture and the introduction of new crops and improved agricultural methods. Southeastern Utah was abandoned by the Ancestral Pueblos by about A.D. 1275. The Fremont resided north of the Ancestral Pueblos. The Fremont culture resembled Basketmaker III or Pueblo I developments. The San Rafael Fremont remains include pit houses, masonry rooms and storage structures. Widely scattered storage features suggest that farm plots were widely distributed to compensate for the highly localized nature of summer rainfall. Many of the Pueblo and Fremont structural sites are especially vulnerable to damage by visitation and vandalism.

Protohistoric Ute (A.D. 1400-1850) presence in the region is established on the basis of petroglyphs, unique brownware potsherds, remains of wooden wickiup structures, and ethnohistoric records.

Euro-American use of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area has been primarily associated with ranching, transportation, and mining. Spanish and Mexican explorers and users of the Old Spanish Trail likely skirted the area in the late 1700's and early 1800's. Similarly, early fur trappers may have crossed the area in the 1830's and 1840's, since inscriptions are found in the region. The earliest Euro-Americans known to have entered what is now the planning unit were the members of the 1859 Macomb military expedition, who were seeking the confluence of the Green and the Grand Rivers. Since that time, the area has seen livestock grazing and some mineral exploration and production, and recovery of rocket boosters in the early 1960's from Green River missile tests, with very little permanent occupancy. Historic structures in the area include several line cabins, corrals and constructed livestock trails.

Paleontology

The most prominent paleontological sites are several dinosaur track locations. These tracks were made in the desert playa sediments within Navajo Sandstone, or in the Kayenta sandstone. One of these sites is quite extensive.

Scenic Values

The scenic values within the planning area are of national significance. The views from the scenic overlooks are routinely compared with those in Grand Canyon National Park (see visitor registers for Needles Overlook). The four overlooks offer outstanding views of the Colorado River canyon, Canyonlands National Park, and the Indian Creek Area, which includes the Sixshooter Peaks. Each of the four overlooks gives the visitor a different view of the surrounding area. The area's scenic beauty

has been recognized by the designation of both the Needles and Anticline Overlooks Roads as Utah Scenic Backways.

The Canyon Rims area provides scenic “wide-open spaces” which are becoming increasingly rare today. Long-range views include those of the LaSal, Abajo and Henry Mountains, as well as views of all three districts of Canyonlands National Park. While driving on the roads on the plateau, visitors are afforded views into the major canyon systems which truncate the landscape (Harts Draw, Hatch Wash and Kane Springs Canyon).

Scenic values in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area are enhanced by its relationship to the scenic resources of Canyonlands National Park, clearly visible from each overlook. Canyonlands National Park was set aside to preserve “superlative, scenic, scientific and archeological features for the inspiration, benefit and use of the public.” (78 Stat. 934 House Report No. 1823, 88th Congress, 2nd Session). This report goes on to say “the total assemblage of features and their visual aspect is unique.” Congress also refers to the Canyonlands area as “vast areas of scenic wonders and recreational opportunities unduplicated elsewhere on the American continent or in the world.” It is important to remember that just as Canyonlands National Park is visible from Canyon Rims, the cliffs of Canyon Rims are equally visible from Canyonlands National Park.

The Visual Resource inventory for this area has been completed. In this system, resources inventoried as Class I should have no visible changes made. In areas inventoried as Class II, changes should not be evident, nor should they attract attention. In VRM Class III, contrasts to the basic elements caused by a management activity may be evident, but changes should remain subordinate to the existing characteristic landscape. The inventory shows the Canyon Rims Recreation Area as Class II along the rims of the plateau (including Hatch Wash) and Class III in the plateau’s interior. It should also be remembered that much of the view being seen is actually outside the Recreation Area itself – the view is often of the scenery underlying the plateau. Much of that viewshed is in the National Park system.

Existing BLM Recreation Facilities

There are nine existing BLM Recreation facilities in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. Each is described briefly below. (In 1982, BLM estimated the replacement cost of these facilities to be \$3,541,000.)

Entrance Station: The Entrance Station consists of a covered, two sided information kiosk surrounded by a range fence in the back and a pole fence fronting the paved road. This Entrance Station is located just past the intersection of the Needles Overlook Road and U.S. Highway 191. Visitors stop and read the exhibits on the kiosk, look at the map of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area, and plan their visit to the area. A metal box affixed to the kiosk contains a free brochure that visitors can take with them on their tour of the area. The Entrance Station is actually located outside the Planning Area (and in the

Monticello Field Office). However, it was designed and built by the Moab Field Office, and the exhibits are maintained by the Moab Field Office.

Windwhistle Campground: Windwhistle Campground is located six miles from U.S. Highway 191. It has 15 individual sites, one group site and a host site. A host is in residence during the prime camping season. All sites have fire grills and picnic tables. The campground has garbage cans located throughout. There is a register box, bulletin board and fee pipe safe located in the middle of the campground. There are three vault toilets (one double vault and one single vault) in the campground (the double vault was new in 1998). A water well, pumphouse and tank supply the campground with water through a gravity feed system. The campground area is fenced to exclude cattle.

Windwhistle Nature Trail: This constructed one-half mile long trail is located near the group site in Windwhistle Campground. It has 28 numbered posts in the ground that correspond to numbers on a pamphlet that is available from a metal box at the trailhead. The pamphlet provides botanical information to the visitor.

Needles Overlook: The Needles Overlook is located 22 miles from U.S. Highway 191. The Overlook has two parking areas (to accommodate buses, recreational vehicles and cars); a double vault toilet (new in 1998) is located at the head of the parking area. A walk-in picnic area is within a hundred feet of the overlook; the picnic area has five large redwood tables fixed into the ground. Five garbage cans are located near the parking area. There is an interpretive kiosk at the point of the Overlook. Connecting paths wind around the Overlook area, linking the parking area and picnic area with the rims and the interpretive kiosk. These paths are in very poor condition. The rim is fenced with a protective barrier composed of metal uprights, crossbars and wire mesh. There are eleven benches located along the path system.

Hatch Point Campground: Hatch Point Campground is located 24 miles from U.S. Highway 191. It has 10 individual sites. All sites have fire grills and picnic tables. The campground has five garbage cans located throughout. There is a register box, bulletin board and fee pipe safe located near the single vault toilet (new in 1999) that serves the campground. Two five hundred gallon water tanks are located on a hill above the campground; they are filled with hauled water. A gravity feed system delivers water to the campers; three faucets are located within the campground. The campground is fenced to exclude cattle.

Canyonlands Overlook: Canyonlands Overlook is located at the end of a four-wheel drive road six miles from the Anticline Road. The Overlook has a single vault toilet, installed in the late 1960's.

Trough Springs Trail: The Trough Springs Trail is a former cattle trail that has been converted into a hiking and horseback trail. Trough Springs Canyon connects the plateau to Kane Creek Canyon below. The trailhead has an interpretive sign and a bulletin board. The route of the trail is marked with cairns.

Minor Overlook: Minor Overlook is connected to the Anticline Road by a short graveled loop road. A protective road barrier is in place along the cliffline. There are no other facilities at this location.

Anticline Overlook: The Anticline Overlook is located 32 miles from U.S. Highway 191; sixteen of those miles are on the graveled Anticline Road. The Overlook has a single vault toilet (new in 1998) and two garbage cans. There are two picnic tables and two fire grills at the walk-in picnic site near the parking lot. Paths lead to an interpretive display and five benches that afford visitors views over the rims of Kane Creek and the Colorado River. These paths are in poor condition. There are protective fences along portions of the rim.

Designation

Canyon Rims Recreation Area was established as a Special Recreation Management Area in the early 1980's by the Bureau of Land Management's State Director for Utah.

Current Resource Utilization

Recreation and livestock grazing are the two current resource utilizations in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. There has been some oil and gas exploration, but there are no currently producing wells. There has been some commercial filming, particularly around the Needles Overlook area. Three commercial recreation permittees use the Canyon Rims Recreation Area; two offer backpacking trips and one offers meditation retreats. The Easter Jeep Safari has a permit for the Flat Iron Mesa motorized jeep tour. As described above, the area is valuable wildlife habitat.

There are portions of four grazing allotments in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area – Hatch Point, Windwhistle, Lisbon and Kane Springs. Each of these are summarized below:

<u>Allotment</u>	<u># & Type of Livestock</u>	<u>Season of Grazing Use</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Hatch Point	1,164 cattle 2,455 sheep (or 491 cattle)	Oct. 15- June 15 Nov. 15- May 31	Approximately 90% of the allotment is in the Planning Area.
Windwhistle	167 cattle	Nov. 1- Feb. 28	100% in Planning Area
Kane Springs	73 cattle	Nov. 1 - March 31	Approximately 10% of the allotment is in the Planning Area
Lisbon	1,657 cattle	Nov. 1 - June 10	Approximately 10% of the allotment is in the Planning Area

Livestock numbers in the above chart are for public land only and do not include exchange of use on State and/or private land.

Rights of Way and Withdrawals

The following is the list of rights of way that have been granted in the planning area. Each is listed by township, range and section.

T. 27S., R. 20E., sections 22 and 23: withdrawal U-12307 for the Canyonlands Overlook recreation site

T. 29S., R. 20E., sections 22 and 23: withdrawal U-12307 for Needles Overlook recreation site

T. 29S., R. 20E., sections 23, 24 and 25: right of way U-15126 for the road to the Needles Overlook

T. 27S., R. 21E., section 8: withdrawal U-12307 for the Anticline Overlook recreation site

T. 27S., R. 21E., sections 8, 17, 21, 27, 28, 33, 34: right of way UTU-15126 for the road to the Anticline Overlook

T. 28 S., R. 21E., section 4: right of way UTU-53843 for a one acre water catchment

T. 28S., R. 21E., section 9: withdrawal U-12307 for the Hatch Point recreation site

T. 28S., R. 21E., sections 25 and 36: withdrawal UTU-41698 (160 acres) for a public water source

T. 28S., R. 21E., sections 4, 5, 8, 9, 16, 21, 22, 27, 34: right of way UTU-15126 for the Canyon Rims Road

T. 28S., R. 22 E., sections 10,11, 12: withdrawal UTU-41553B for public water source

T. 28S., R. 22E., section 12: powerline right of way UTU-61853

T. 28S., R. 22E., sections 12, 13, 24: Williams Pipeline right of way UTU0-15664 (25 feet from center line)

T. 28S., R. 22E., sections 12, 13, 24: MAPCO Pipeline right of way UTU-43521 (25 feet from center line)

T. 28S., R. 22E., section 35: withdrawal UTU-41553B for public water source

T. 29S., R. 22E., section 1: withdrawal UTU-41580 for public water source

T. 29S., R. 22E., section 31: right of way UTU-15126 for Canyon Rims Road

T. 29 1/2S., R. 22E., section 33: right of way UTU-15126 for Canyon Rims Road

T. 30S., R. 22E., section 13: withdrawal UTU-12307 for the Windwhistle recreation site

T. 28S., R. 23E., sections 18 and 19: telephone right of way UTU-5470S (10 feet from center line)

T. 28S., R. 23E., sections 18 and 19: powerline right of way UTU0-48144 (15 feet from center line)

T. 28S., R. 23E., sections 19, 30, 31: Williams Pipeline right of way UTU0-15664 (25 feet from center line)

T. 28S., R. 23E., sections 19, 30, 31: MAPCO Pipeline right of way UTU-43521 (25 feet from center line)

T. 29S., R. 23E., section 31: powerline right of way UTU0-48144 (15 feet from center line)

T. 29S., R. 23E., sections 5, 8, 17, 21, 27, 28: Williams Pipeline right of way UTU0-15664 (25 feet from center line)

T. 29S., R. 23E., sections 5, 8, 17, 21, 27, 28: MAPCO Pipeline right of way UTU-43521 (25 feet from center line)

T. 29S., R. 23E., section 17: withdrawal UTU-12307 (20 acres) for Looking Glass Rock recreation site

T. 29S., R. 23E., section 31: right of way UTU-78693 for access route to Michael Haff's private land

T. 30S., R. 23E., section 10: withdrawal for public water source

T. 30S., R. 23E., section 10: right of way UTU0-15225 for material site

T. 30S., R. 23E., sections 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 22: right of way UTU-15126 for Canyon Rims Road

T. 30S., R. 23E., sections 21, 22: withdrawal (120 acres) for public water source

Wilderness Topics

Portions of the planning area include lands with wilderness characteristics. The Hatch Wash wilderness inventory area is located entirely within the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. It was found to possess wilderness characteristics by the Bureau of Land Management in its *1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory*. Hatch Wash is greater than 5,000 acres, in a natural condition, provides outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation, and has supplemental values. (In addition, very small portions of the Harts Point wilderness inventory area are found along the rim of Harts Draw within the Recreation Area.) Recreation uses in the wilderness inventory areas include day hiking, backpacking, photography and nature study. There are no developed recreation facilities in the inventory areas.

The planning area also includes additional lands proposed for wilderness by the Utah Wilderness Coalition.

Current Management Programs

Recreation management within the Canyon Rims Recreation Area includes providing information at recreation sites, managing and maintaining developed recreation sites, protecting visual quality, and managing commercial recreation uses by utilizing special recreation permits. BLM's non-recreation management programs are focused upon meeting the objectives of the Grand Resource Management Plan as described in section II below.

D. Recreation Use in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area

Present and Expected Use

In 1998, the BLM installed traffic counters on the Canyon Rims Road, at the Needles Overlook, and on the Anticline Road. Two year averages (September 1998- September 2000) of the data from these traffic counters are summarized below: The data is conservative; periods in which the counter was malfunctioning are not adjusted for.

Months	Vehicles per period
September- mid-November	3116
Mid-November-mid March	1881
mid-March-June	5003
June-September	2256
Total vehicles per year	12,256

Vehicle counts on the Needles Overlook Road and the Anticline Road show consistent patterns of visitation, with the Needles Overlook Road averaging 85% of the vehicle count on the main entrance road, and the Anticline Road averaging 15% of the vehicle count on the entrance road. If each vehicle averages 3 occupants (which is a very conservative estimate of vacation vehicle loads), an average of 36,768 persons visited the Canyon Rims Recreation Area in each of these two years. Of these, 31,253 visited the Needles Overlook and 5515 went to the Anticline Overlook. (It should be noted that these roads receive very little non-recreation traffic.)

In the Winter of 2001, a more accurate traffic counter was installed at the Canyon Rims turnoff. From December 17, 2001 to August 3, 2002, 32,296 vehicles had been recorded on this counter. At 3 occupants per vehicle, this results in a visitor count of 96,888 for the first eight months of the year. (It should be noted that the new counter is closer to the entrance of the Recreation Area, thus accounting for some of the increase in visitor use).

In 1998 Site Use at Canyon Rims Recreation Area was reported through BLM's Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) as follows:

Canyon Rims Recreation Area Recreation Site Use
Source: RMIS

Site Name	# of Visitors/2 year average 1999-2000
Anticline Overlook	5,780 visitors
Entrance Station	10,322 visitors
Canyonlands Overlook	290 visitors
Canyon Rims Dispersed Recreation	12,012 visitors
Hatch Point Campground	836 visitors
Minor Overlook	3,487 visitors
Needles Overlook	26,002 visitors
Windwhistle Campground	3,142 visitors

Visitation to the Canyon Rims Recreation Area is seasonal in nature. Campground use records indicate that use is high from March to June and from September to October with peak use occurring in May and to a lesser extent in October. July and August are less popular for camping than the spring and fall peak use periods. Use is very low from early November through the end of February when most people consider it too cold to camp.

Recreation Activity Preferences

BLM does not have quantitative information on the activity preferences of Canyon Rims Recreation Area users. Based upon observation and casual interviews, users can be divided into several categories:

- overnight campers using Windwhistle and Hatch Point Campgrounds either as a one night stop or as a base of operations for a more extended stay in the area. These are fee demonstration area campgrounds; a nightly camping fee is charged for their use.
- campers unable to get into the Canyonlands National Park Campground at Needles
- motorists taking scenic drives to any of the Overlooks (with Needles Overlook being by far the most popular destination)

-hikers and backpackers (who mainly hike into the canyon systems)

-mountain bikers, motorcyclists, four-wheel drivers and ATV'ers using the secondary road system to tour the area's backcountry more extensively

Discussions with visitors indicate that there is a strong preference for the relatively undeveloped character of the Canyon Rims area. Comments on the visitor registers also reflect this preference.

User Profile

Observations indicate that most visitors arrive in small family and friendship groups. Educational groups do occasionally use the group site at Windwhistle Campground. Most campers stay only one or two nights. Exceptions are most likely during Easter, spring breaks, and fall when some visitors come for 3 to 7 days.

Based upon observation, the majority of spring and fall visitors reside in Colorado and the Salt Lake City/Provo area. During the summer season, the mix of visitors changes to include significant numbers of tourists from areas other than the four corners states, especially California, and from western Europe. Summer visitors often include the Canyon Rims Recreation Area as part of a tour of the National Parks in the Southwest. The Needles Overlook is included in many guidebooks, both in English and in German.

Visitation Change Factors

Recreation use of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area is expected to increase slightly assuming stable economic conditions. Use of the nearby National Parks, which climbed rapidly during most of the 1990's, leveled off during the end of the decade, but is expected to grow again as the 2002 Winter Olympics approach. (Many visitors to the National Parks also include Canyon Rims Recreation Area in their itinerary). Tourism is being professionally promoted through the combined efforts of the Utah Travel Council, San Juan County Economic Development, the Canyonlands Travel Region, the Moab Area Travel Council, and private businesses. Mountain bike participation in the Moab area appears to have leveled off during the late 1990's, while off-highway vehicle use seems to have increased. The area's popularity with the filming industry, which raises public awareness of the region, continues.

The area immediately to the east of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area (often called The Cameo Cliffs) has been relatively unused by recreationists until recently. This area, east across U.S. Highway 191, has become more popular recently with motorized users, including ATV'ers. This change in visitation to an adjacent area could change visitation patterns in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area..

E. Planning Issues

1. Recreation Facilities

The first issue to be addressed through the recreation management plan includes providing facilities for continued visitor enjoyment of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area while protecting the resources of the area. While the majority of the facilities are already in place, this plan commits to their maintenance, improvement and upkeep. For instance, the trails at the overlooks have seriously deteriorated and are in need of attention. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act requires the Bureau to improve accessibility as sites are upgraded. There is inadequate directional, safety and interpretive signing in the planning area. The Looking Glass Rock area has become more popular as a recreation destination and some structure is needed to control use of the area.

2. Off-Highway Vehicle Management

The second issue to be addressed through this plan is the inconsistent vehicle designations within the planning area. The western portion of the planning area is “Limited to Existing Roads and Trails,” while the eastern portion of the planning area is in the “open” category. To prevent resource deterioration from cross-country vehicle use, this plan considers managing the entire planning area as “Limited to Existing Roads” to protect its core values. In addition, the growing popularity of motorized activities in and near the planning area increases the need for consistent vehicle designations throughout the planning area.

3. Special Recreation Permits

The third issue to be addressed is the issuance of commercial, special, organized or competitive event permits. Core values of the planning area must be considered in the issuance of such permits.

4. Resource Impacts

The fourth issue to be addressed in the planning area is that of resource deterioration as a result of dispersed recreation use. Most of this deterioration occurs as a result of camping at certain popular locations. This plan considers several actions that are designed to protect the resources of Canyon Rims from further deterioration while maintaining recreational opportunities.

5. Visual Resource Management

The fifth issue to be considered in this plan is maintaining visual quality. Objectives have been established for visual resource management (VRM) classes in the BLM Visual Resource Management System. The BLM has inventoried the area and found it to contain 33,037 acres of VRM Class II and 67,236 acres of VRM Class III. This plan considers managing the area to maintain visual quality at these levels, and proposes an RMP amendment to do so. To achieve this consistency, oil and gas leasing categories could be altered. Currently, the western portion of the planning area (and the rims of Hatch Wash) are in Category 2 (Open to Leasing with special stipulations), while the eastern portion of the planning area is in Category 1 (Open to Leasing with standard stipulations --see Map 3).

II. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND CONSTRAINTS

The overall stated goal of the Grand Resource Management Plan is:

"to provide for multiple uses on the Public Lands, while balancing conflicts between renewable and nonrenewable resources and incorporating the necessary constraints to protect renewable resources from irreversible decline".

RMP Recreation Management Objectives

The following recreation management objectives along with pertinent planning decisions are contained in the Grand Resource Management Plan:

"to provide opportunities for OHV use while protecting sensitive resources" (Grand RMP, page 15)

"to accommodate the expanding recreation use while reducing the impacts on the recreation resource base" (Grand RMP, page 16)

The backcountry route system in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area provides ample opportunity for motorized recreation opportunities; staying on the route system protects sensitive resources. Additionally, recreation use has been accommodated in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area through the installation of toilets and other infrastructure improvements to reduce recreation impacts.

The RMP directs management

"To maintain two developed campgrounds (30 acres)... and three developed scenic overlooks (1,120 acres) to provide public outdoor recreational opportunities" (Grand RMP, page 27) (Note: these two campgrounds are Windwhistle and Hatch Point; the overlooks are Needles, Anticline and Canyonlands Overlooks – see map, Grand RMP, page 28)

“ to continue to issue recreation use permits ...to enhance outdoor recreational opportunities and provide business opportunities for private enterprise” (Grand RMP, page 27)

“to maintain five miles of developed trails to provide outdoor hiking opportunities” (Grand RMP, page 27; the map on page 28 shows Trough Springs Trail as one of two trails to be maintained)

-to maintain 27 miles of developed scenic road system to provide access to sightseeing opportunities.” (Grand RMP, page 27; the map on page 28 of the RMP shows that the Needles Overlook Road, the Anticline Overlook Road and the Canyonlands Overlook Road comprise all 27 miles of these roads).

RMP Management Objectives for Non-recreation Resources

Several key objectives and corresponding decisions of the Grand Resource Management Plan apply to the lands within the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. These are quoted or paraphrased below:

"to manage wildlife habitat to favor a diversity of game and nongame wildlife species, support Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) long-range management goals for deer, elk, and antelope, and protect riparian and other areas important to wildlife (including raptors and other nongame birds and game fish.” (Grand RMP, page 15)

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area provides habitat for deer and antelope. Bighorn sheep may also utilize the area. Raptors such as golden eagles and peregrine falcons use the Canyon Rims Recreation Area as well.

"to retain public lands in support of the objectives of the resource management programs, provide for community expansion, and ensure continued public access to key recreation use areas" (Grand RMP, page 15)

Thus, the Grand Resource Management Plan calls for continued public access to the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

The RMP also directs livestock management in the allotments that are within the planning area.

"to emphasize livestock use while improving or maintaining vegetative conditions to benefit both livestock and wildlife" (Grand RMP, page 15)

The present management actions for all the allotments within the planning area are directed by the RMP. These include drill seeding and other livestock manipulation techniques.

"to provide a network of designated corridors for existing and future utility systems, while designating utility avoidance areas to protect other resource values and programs" (Grand RMP, page 15)

A utility corridor identified in the RMP crosses the Canyon Rims Recreation Area just west of U.S. Highway 191. There are no utility avoidance areas in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

"to keep public lands open for exploration and development of mineral resources while protecting areas with sensitive resource values" (Grand RMP, page 15)

In the RMP, some of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area is open to oil and gas leasing with special stipulations (Category 2), and some is Category 1 (Open to Leasing with Standard Stipulations). The small areas immediately adjacent to the developed recreation sites are Category 3 - Open with No Surface Occupancy. (See Map 3 for Oil and Gas Leasing Categories).

Other Planning Efforts Effecting the Planning Area

The Fire Management Plan for the Moab District was signed by the Acting State Director on August 6, 1998. The majority of the Planning Area is in Fire Management Zone #2 (which means fuel types composed of mainly grass and brush), while a small portion of the eastern side of the planning area is in Fire Management Zone #1 (characterized by pinyon-junipers). The fire treatments proposed for the area include two prescribed burns or mechanical treatments. One is in the Hatch Point allotment (7950 acres) and one is in the Windwhistle Allotment (1825 acres). There are also fire treatments proposed in the Lisbon Allotment, but these are not within the Planning Area boundaries.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Classes

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes were not identified in the Grand RMP because at the time this RMP was written, ROS class identification was not a common feature of RMPs. ROS classes were inventoried for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area in 1998. Three classes were identified in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area: Roaded Natural (40,912 acres, or 41% of the total BLM acreage), Semi-primitive Motorized (56,339 acres, or 56% of the total BLM acreage), and Semi-primitive Nonmotorized (3,022 acres, or 3% of the total BLM acreage). In general, the area near the main access roads are Roaded Natural, the plateau country away from the main roads is Semi-primitive Motorized, and the Hatch Wash drainage is Semi-primitive, Non-motorized (See Map 4 for ROS Classifications). The three ROS classes inventoried in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area are described below:

Roaded Natural (Class IV)

-To provide a somewhat natural appearing environment with moderate evidences of the sights and sounds of man, permit motorized use, harmonize recreation management practices with the natural environment, and manage for no more than moderate concentrations of users with facilities sometimes provided for group activities.

Semi-primitive motorized (Class III)

-To provide a relatively natural or naturally appearing environment where evidence of man, restrictions, and controls are present, but subtle; permit motorized use, recreation facilities blend with the natural environment, and management that fosters dispersal of users.

Semi-primitive, non-motorized (Class II)

-To provide a largely natural appearing environment with little evidence of man, few restrictions or visitor controls, no motorized use, few, if any, recreation facilities other than trails and signs and management that fosters dispersal of users.

Management Objectives for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area

The overall objective for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area is to protect, manage and improve the natural resources of the area while allowing for responsible recreation. The goal is to manage the Canyon Rims Recreation Area for dispersed recreation activities such as auto touring and developed camping on the primary road system, touring the secondary road system by motorized vehicle and mountain bike, and camping, hiking and backpacking the canyons, in accordance with the ROS classes described above. Interpretive and educational opportunities will be utilized to realize the potential of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

The following specific objectives for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area were developed after considering past management actions, legal requirements, and conformance with the Grand RMP.

A. Cultural

To protect cultural, historical and archaeological resources on the Canyon Rims in accordance with BLM policies. All activities will be evaluated and designed to avoid or mitigate negative impacts to cultural resources.

B. Minerals Management

Change those oil and gas leasing parcels currently in Category 1 (Open to Leasing) to Category 2 (open to oil and gas leasing with special stipulations). Categories would be examined for their congruence with

Visual Resource Management classes (see below). This would involve examining the 53,518 acres in Category 1. (There are 46,040 acres in Category 2 which are open to oil and gas leasing with special stipulations). The Environmental Assessment (EA) which accompanies this plan analyzes changing the areas (through an RMP amendment) currently in Category 1 to Category 2.

C. Wildlife and Vegetation Resources

To protect and manage habitat so that wildlife, special status plant and animal species, ecological sites, water quality and native riparian and upland vegetation will benefit.

D. Grazing

To maintain all range improvements at the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

E. Land Tenure Adjustments

To acquire or exchange private and SITLA (School Institutional Trust Lands Administration) lands from willing administrators within the planning area. Should any lands become public, they will be managed as the public lands are in this plan.

F. Off Road Vehicle Designations

To continue to manage the portion of the planning area that is limited to existing roads under the Grand RMP as limited to existing roads. This plan changes lands currently in the “open” category to “limited to existing roads” for consistency and resource protection. The Environmental Assessment (EA) which accompanies this plan analyzes this change in vehicle designation by proposing a Plan Amendment. This would involve changing 58,306 acres in the “open” category to “limited to existing roads.”

In limited areas of high visitation, roads will be marked so that off-road travel does not occur. These areas include, but are not limited to, the areas around the developed sites. These sites are already in the area that is limited to existing roads in the Grand RMP.

G. Recreation Activity Management

To manage the Canyon Rims Recreation Area for dispersed recreation activities such as auto touring, backpacking, hiking and backcountry road driving, in accordance with the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum inventory presented above. There will be no provision for intensive (open, play type) motorized recreation, nor for competitive motorized events.

To manage the major recreation facilities in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area at their current level of development. (Provision will be made to upgrade the facilities to meet the Americans with Disabilities

Act requirements.) It is recognized that maintenance is an on-going concern with any facility; however, the intent of this plan is to allow for maintenance of the facilities only to their current level of development. It may be necessary to upgrade interpretive exhibits so that visitors may better appreciate the area, but these exhibits will not include major new construction activities.

H. Visual Resource Management

To manage the Canyon Rims Recreation Area to maintain its visual quality following objectives established for visual resource management (VRM) classes in the BLM Visual Resource Management System. The Recreation Area has been inventoried for visual quality and found to contain 33,037 acres of VRM Class II and 67,236 acres of VRM Class III. Management would be consistent with those VRM classes. VRM Class II is managed so that changes in any of the basic elements (form, line, color and texture) caused by a management activity should not be evidence in the landscape. In VRM Class III, contrasts to the basic elements (form, line, color and texture) caused by a management activity may be evident and begin to attract attention in the characteristic landscape. However, the changes should remain subordinate to the existing characteristic landscape.

III. THE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

A. Introduction

Management actions described in this plan, especially those related to the management of visitor use, are designed to protect the wildlife, visual, cultural, vegetation and scenic resources of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area while allowing for visitor enjoyment.

B. Management Guidelines for Other Resource Programs

Management guidelines for other programs are addressed in the Grand RMP. Those guidelines pertinent to the Canyon Rims Recreation Area are summarized in section II above and are consistent with actions prescribed in this plan. Two resource programs would be altered by the implementation of this plan – Visual Resource Management and oil and gas leasing.

1) Visual Resource Management

Manage the Recreation Area to maintain its visual quality following objectives established for visual resource management (VRM) classes in the BLM Visual Resource Management System. The Recreation Area has been inventoried and found to contain VRM classes II and III. The Environmental Analysis which accompanies this plan analyzes the adoption of the existing inventory classes into management objectives.

2) Oil and Gas Leasing

As a result of Visual Resource Management, change Category 1 leasing areas in the Recreation Area. The Recreation Area currently has 53,518 acres in Category 1 (open to oil and gas leasing with standard stipulations). Of these 53,518 acres, 40,650 are currently under lease, leaving 12,868 unleased acres in Category 1. The Environmental Assessment which accompanies this plan analyzes the congruence of Category 1 leasing areas with the VRM classes analyzed in the same document. As a result of this analysis, Category 1 leasing areas may have to be changed to Category 2.

C. Land Tenure Adjustment

Exchange criteria have been incorporated into the Grand RMP through the plan amendment process. These criteria describe conditions under which land exchange efforts could be initiated.

Acquire the following tracts of land managed by the Utah School Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) through exchange. This would provide for consistent management of the area to benefit public recreation access and use.

- 1) a section along the Anticline Road near its terminus at the Anticline Overlook - to protect recreation and scenic values. (T. 27 S, R. 21 E, Section 16) (on Priority #3 A: "SITLA Lands BLM Would Like to Acquire")
- 2) a section adjacent to the Canyonlands Overlook Road - to protect scenic values. (T. 28 S, R. 21 E, Section 32)
- 3) a section along the rim west of the Anticline Road - to protect scenic values (T.27 S, R 21 E, Section 32).
- 4) a section traversed by the Needles Road - to protect scenic values. (T. 29 S, R. 21 E, Section 36) (on Priority #3A: "SITLA Lands BLM Would Like to Acquire")
- 5) a section traversed by the Needles Road - to protect scenic values. (T .29 ½ S, R. 22 E, Section 32) (on Priority #3A: SITLA Lands BLM Would Like to Acquire")
- 6) a section traversed by the Needles Road - to protect scenic values. (T. 29 S, R. 22 E, Section 32) (On Priority #3A:"SITLA Lands BLM Would Like to Acquire")
- 7) a section immediately to the east of Looking Glass Rock - to protect scenic values and to improve parking management. (T. 29 S, R. 23 E, Section 16) (on Priority #3A: "SITLA Lands BLM Would Like to Acquire")
- 8) a section along the Flat Iron Mesa Road near its terminus - to protect scenic values. (T. 28 S, R. 22 E, Section 16)

9) a section immediately adjacent to the Needles Overlook Road - to protect scenic values. (T. 29 S, R. 21 E, Section 32) (On Priority #3A: "SITLA Lands BLM Would Like to Acquire")

10) a section to the south of West Coyote Canyon along the rim - to protect recreation access. (T. 29 S, R. 22 E, Section 2) (On Priority #3A: "SITLA Lands BLM Would Like to Acquire")

11) a section to the west of the Anticline Road along the rim - to protect scenic values and to provide recreation access to Canyonlands Overlook. (T. 28 S, R. 20 E, Section 2) (On Priority #3A: "SITLA Lands BLM Would Like to Acquire")

12) a section on the rim of Harts Draw near Windwhistle Campground - to protect scenic values. (T. 30 S, R. 22 E, Section 16) (On Priority #3A: "SITLA Lands BLM Would Like to Acquire")

13) six sections in Lockhart Basin --to protect scenic values from Needles Overlook (T. 29 S., R. 20 E., sections. 16, 32, 36; T. 29 ½ S., R. 20 E., sections. 32 and 36; T. 30 S., R. 20 E., sec. 2) (all on Priority #3A - "SITLA Lands BLM Would Like to Acquire")

14) a section along the Canyon Rims Road - to protect scenic values. (T. 30 S., R. 21 E., section 2) (on Priority #3A - "SITLA Lands BLM Would Like to Acquire")

15) a section along the Canyon Rims Road - to protect scenic values (T. 30 S., R. 23 E., section 16) (on Priority #3A: "SITLA Lands BLM Would Like to Acquire")

16) a section in Joe Wilson Canyon with excellent riparian, wildlife and hydrology resources (T. 29 S., R. 23 E., section 32) (On Priority #3A - "SITLA Lands BLM Would Like to Acquire")

The SITLA sections are listed in order of priority for exchange.

Consider acquiring other lands within the Canyon Rims Recreation Area from non-governmental sellers if and when they initiate such proposals to the BLM. Acquire these lands via exchange or purchase through the Land and Water Conservation Fund or other funding sources in order to provide additional locations for public recreation, protect scenic values, and improve manageability.

As an option to acquisition, consider acquiring scenic easements along the heavily travelled routes from willing private sellers. The purpose of these easements would be to preserve critical viewsheds and maintain the natural character of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

Reserve Right of Ways to the United States to protect federal investment at developed recreation sites.

D. Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Designations

Off-highway vehicle designations for the western portion of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area were approved as part of the Grand RMP in July of 1985. (See Map 5). By that action, this western portion of the area (40,656 acres) was limited to existing roads and trails. At that time, the eastern portion of the planning area (58,306 acres) was left as “open” – that is, cross country vehicle travel was permissible. This plan changes the entire planning area to “limited to existing roads”. The Designation Method proposed is through a Plan Amendment to the Grand RMP, which is analyzed in the Environmental Assessment accompanying this plan. A change in designation for the eastern portion of the planning area would take place through a notice in the Federal Register upon approval of the Plan Amendment.

It is further recommended that future Resource Management Plans consider changing the OHV designation in the entire Canyon Rims Recreation Area to “limited to designated roads.”

In addition, around the highly visited sites listed below, routes will be marked in order to guide visitor use. These highly visited sites are already in the area limited to existing roads by the action of the Grand RMP. These routes will be marked in coordination with San Juan County. The areas to receive marking are: Needles Overlook area, Anticline Overlook area, Canyonlands Overlook area, Minor Overlook area, Hatch and Windwhistle campground areas. Other routes may be marked if use reaches this level of activity.

E. Hunting

Hunting in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area is an allowable activity and is governed according to State Law.

F. Recreation: Site Development

The purpose of this plan is to maintain the current level of site development. Improvements to the facilities will be consistent with the general character of the developed sites.

Each of the nine developed recreation sites in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area is listed below with a list of proposed actions.

1) Entrance Kiosk: Extend the concrete pad around the kiosk and make its entrance accessible. Maintain the two sided interpretive displays and the fence around the kiosk. Continue to distribute interpretive brochures at the entrance. (Note: this kiosk will be maintained by the Moab Field Office, even though it is located in the Monticello Field Office.)

- 2) Windwhistle Campground: Maintain the 16 individual sites (including one host site) and the group site. This includes the three vault toilets (one single and one double vault), kiosk, garbage cans and picnic tables. Continue to maintain the water well, pump and water system that supplies the campground. Maintain the fence and cattle guard which excludes livestock from the campground.
- 3) Windwhistle Nature Trail: Maintain as an interpretive trail for hiking only. Continue to supply interpretive brochures.
- 4) Needles Overlook: Improve and maintain the walkways at the Overlook and upgrade key walkways to appropriate levels of accessibility. Maintain the existing five picnic tables in their current location. Add accessible picnic tables at the top of the parking lot. Continue to maintain the accessible double vaulted toilet, garbage cans and benches. Improve interpretive displays throughout the Overlook, including information that would help the visitors orient themselves. Maintain the protective fencing at the overlook, and add approximately four feet of fence to complete the space in the protective fencing between the picnic area and the northwest side of the overlook.
- 5) Hatch Point Campground: Maintain the ten campsites, including one vault toilet, picnic tables, and garbage cans. Continue to haul water to supply the water system at the campground. Upgrade water storage and distribution system. Maintain the fence and cattleguard to exclude livestock.
- 6) Canyonlands Overlook: Retain as a four-wheel drive destination. Manage this site to retain its backcountry character. Sign the overlook as a destination (from the Anticline Overlook Road) and provide interpretive services at the beginning and end of the road.
- 7) Trough Springs : Maintain the trailhead parking area and the foot trail to Kane Creek Canyon. Manage for non-motorized use. Maintain hiking trail markings, and mark its entrance from Kane Creek Canyon.
- 8) Minor Overlook: Maintain to its current character. This overlook consists of a graveled road, protective chains, and a memorial plaque. Provide informational and interpretive information to visitors.
- 9) Anticline Overlook: Improve and make accessible the footpaths around the Overlook. Maintain the site, including the vault toilet, garbage cans, protective fencing picnic tables and benches. Maintain the cattle guard and fencing excluding livestock from the Overlook. Improve interpretive displays at the Overlook.
- 10) Manage Looking Glass Rock as an additional recreation site within the planning area. Delineate a parking area at Looking Glass Rock. Manage as a day use area for picnicking, photography and hiking. Prohibit campfires between the Rock and the county B road. A right of way has been reserved for this recreation site.

11) Photo viewpoints along Anticline Road: upgrade signing to identify sites and to provide on-site interpretive information through wayside exhibits at the already-existing parking areas. Develop an auto tour brochure to key Canyon Rims sites and routes as a Canyonlands Natural History Association sales item. This brochure would have detailed interpretive and educational information about the area.

**CANYON RIMS RECREATION AREA
BLM FACILITIES AND NEARBY AMENITIES**

Canyon Rims Recreation Area Site	Miles From Highway 191	I n f o K I o s k	T e n t C a m p I n g	R V C a m p I n g	G r o u p C a m p I n g	E x h i b i t s	V i e w p o i n t s	H I k I n g T r a i l	M t n. B I c y c l I n g	J e e p I n g	P I c n I c A r e a	S c e n I c D r I v e	T o I l e t s	T r a s h
Entrance Station	0	x				x						x		
Windwhistle Campground and Nature Trail	6	x	x	x	x			x			x		x	x
Needles Overlook	22	x						x			x	x	x	x
Hatch Point Campground	24	x	x	x									x	x
Canyonlands Overlook	32								x	x			x	

Canyon Rims Recreation Area Site	Miles From Highway 191	I n f o K I o s k	T e n t C a m p I n g	R V C a m p I n g	G r o u p C a m p I n g	E x h i b i t s	V i e w p o i n t s	H I k I n g T r a I l	M t n. B I c y c l I n g	J e e p I n g	P I c n I c A r e a	S c e n I c D r I v e	T o I l e t s	T r a s h
Trough Springs Trailhead	28	x						x						
Minor Overlook	30					x	x		x	x		x		
Anticline Overlook	32	x									x	x	x	x
Entrance Road						x	x					x		
Anticline Rd. to Needles						x	x					x		

G. Recreation: Management of Dispersed Activities

Manage recreation for dispersed activities as resource protection allows. Backcountry driving will be managed as an on-road activity only. Dispersed camping will be allowed away from developed recreation sites. Should resource damage from camping become apparent, over-used sites may be withdrawn from camping permanently, or temporarily until the damage is healed. If unacceptable impacts as a result of dispersed camping occur, camping rules will be imposed regarding fires, human waste management, and stay limitations.

Except for Trough Springs Hiking Trailhead, manage hiking and backpacking activities as primitive experiences. Should use of hiking trails such as those informal routes in the Hatch Wash system increase substantially, hiking trails may have to be identified and maintained.

H. Recreation: Resource and Visitor Protection

Maintain trash service at Windwhistle and Hatch Point Campgrounds, and at Needles and Anticline Overlooks.

Conduct routine patrols of the area and educate visitors about low-impact visitation methods. Patrols of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area will reduce incidents of vandalism, assure safe operation of visitor facilities, develop safety recommendations, and provide public information about safety concerns.

Restrict camping to the two designated campgrounds within a two mile radius of these campgrounds. In addition, prohibit camping at the Needles and Anticline Overlooks, as well as at Looking Glass Rock. (See Map 6: Camping Restriction Zones). Dispersed camping may be prohibited or restricted to designated sites at Minor and Canyonlands Overlooks should conditions warrant.

Do not issue wood cutting permits for Planning Area. Prohibit collection of firewood (including wood gathering and wood cutting) around the developed sites within the Camping Restriction zones.

Maintain the visual quality of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area by assuring that management activities on public lands meet or exceed VRM Class II objectives where applicable within the Planning Area where consistent with the exercise of valid existing rights. (In general, VRM Class II is found along the rims of the plateau and along Hatch Wash. See Map 7.) Following VRM Class II objectives, changes in any of the basic landscape elements (form, line, color, and texture) caused by a management activity should not be evident in the characteristic landscape. Contrasts may be seen, but should not attract attention. Earth tones and other colors that are not visually obtrusive will be used in the construction of facilities.

Maintain the visual quality in that portion of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area that has been inventoried as VRM Class III (generally in the interior of the area – see Map 7). In Class III areas, contrasts to the basic elements caused by a management activity may be evident and begin to attract attention. However, the changes should remain subordinate to the existing characteristic landscape.

The environmental analysis which accompanies this plan analyzes the effects of establishing VRM classes as inventoried for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

Continue to exclude domestic livestock grazing from developed recreation sites as specified under Recreation: Site Developments. Campground fencing will also be compatible with wildlife constructions standards where applicable.

Sign popular backcountry routes if use and conditions warrant in order to provide for visitor safety. Routes may be marked to popular locations, such as Horsehead Rock, Boxcar Bridge and other destinations.

Prohibit construction activities within identified peregrine falcon nesting territories from February through June in order to limit disturbance to this species.

Work with the Utah Department of Highways to provide a northbound deceleration lane on U.S. 191 at the entrance to the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

Specific management guidelines for Hatch Wash include the elimination of social hiking trails (should unacceptable impacts warrant this step) and the establishment of a single hiking trail system. As Hatch Wash is in Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Class III (Semi-primitive Non Motorized), it will be managed as a largely natural appearing environment with few restrictions or visitor controls, and no motorized use. No recreation facilities (other than hiking trails and signs only if conditions warrant) will be considered or constructed.

It is recommended to future Resource Management Plans that the Needles Overlook and Anticline Roads be part of a scenic retention corridor. These roads are in VRM Class II and III and would be managed according to those objectives.

I. Recreation: Fees and Permits

Continue to collect user fees for overnight use of individual sites at Windwhistle and Hatch campgrounds, and for use of the Windwhistle Group Site. Maintain the group site reservation system and collect group site reservation fees. Collected fees will be used to offset operating, management and maintenance costs for the developed sites within the Planning Area.

Continue to require special recreation permits for all commercial recreation uses of the Public Lands. There will be no provision for motorized events (commercial, special, organized group or competitive) in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area, except that commercial and special event motorized use will be allowed on the Flat Iron Mesa Jeep Safari Trail; however, competitive motorized use will not be allowed on this or any other routes within the Planning Area.

Continue to require a letter of authorization for non-commercial events such as weddings.

J. Recreation: Vending

Provide for a generally natural-appearing area supportive of recreationists engaging in recreation activities free from on-site solicitations by verbal, visual, electronic, audio, or other means, except as authorized through a special recreation permit. Advertising for special event vendors will be restricted to signs attached to the vendor's booth or sales area.

Short-term vending permits may be issued to vendors, in conjunction with authorized special events, who meet the following criteria and have the written concurrence of the event coordinator:

Approval of vending permits will consider the following: 1) the demand or need for the proposed product or service; 2) if the proposed vending enhances existing recreational activities, uses, or opportunities in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area; 3) the potential for the proposed sale of products/services to degrade the general visitor experience, natural resources, or character of the area. Applicants for vending permits must have a San Juan County business license covering the proposed activity. No vending will be authorized for services or goods that can be provided outside the Canyon Rims Recreation Area except for vending permits issued in conjunction with special events.

The number of permits will initially be limited to one for each general type of product or service following the policy for vending authorizations stated above. Issuance of additional permits will be considered on a case-by-case basis if there is a demonstrated need (for example, the demand exceeds what one vendor can provide) and all the criteria for issuance of a vending permit are met.

K. Recreation: Maintenance

Maintain developed recreation sites in a natural but safe condition through the provision of adequate funding, staff, and volunteer labor. Retain the primary scenic qualities of the Recreation Area, while providing visitor facilities.

Maintain a data base of maintenance needs based upon an annual survey of maintenance needs for all recreation sites within the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. Integrate all facility developments into BLM's maintenance management system (FIMMS). Identify and complete maintenance actions made annually to maintain all developed sites in the "Good" condition category in FIMMS.

Integrate maintenance needs for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area into the BLM's budget cycle.

L. Interpretative Services

Provide interpretative services to visitors to the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.

Continue to provide interpretive/informational brochure at the Entrance Station.

Continue to provide interpretive brochure at the Windwhistle Nature Trail.

Improve interpretive displays at the major overlooks and photopoints, focusing on the viewshed being seen by the visitor.

Provide interpretive information at the graveled pulloff areas on the Anticline Road.

Use past human history of the region as the primary interpretive theme for the Planning Area. Additional themes to be developed are wildlife resources, geological forces shaping the area, and plants of the plateau.

Develop and implement an interpretive plan, working with Canyonlands Natural History Association to develop quality exhibits and printed materials.

M. Administration

The following staff positions are needed to help implement this plan, and manage the Recreation Area. These staff and others working in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area should be required to wear BLM uniform components to give an agency identity to this area.

Permanent staff:

1 outdoor recreation planner (Canyon Rims Recreation Area Manager)

½ law enforcement ranger

(to enforce Riverway's special user requirements, vehicle control, OHV designations, fee collection, unruly campers, criminal investigation, etc.)

1 maintenance worker

(to monitor all infrastructure and supervise/perform construction and maintenance work)

Seasonal staff:

one recreation maintenance seasonal employee

(to cover spring, summer and fall seasons; assist permanent staff and provide visitor services/information).

one recreation technician to provide public information, provide additional patrol presence and collect campground fees

Extend staff capability by utilizing campground hosts and other volunteers to the maximum extent possible.

Utilize the Moab Information Center as a means of informing visitors about the recreation opportunities in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area and the need for conforming with the special user requirements.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION PHASING AND COSTS

A. Implementation Phasing

The recreation facilities in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area were constructed in the 1960's. The campgrounds, overlooks and roads in the Recreation Area represent a significant capital investment on the part of the Bureau of Land Management. Historical costs of the two campgrounds and two major overlooks total \$119,500, while the road costs approximate \$1 million. In addition, considerable funds have been expended over the years on routine maintenance, with the majority of funds going toward upkeep of the Needles Overlook and Anticline Overlook

roads. A service contract has been used to provide for campground and overlook cleaning and for the disposal of the human waste from the vault toilets.

As noted above in the Management Program section, there are some additional improvements needed to protect public land resources, provide for visitor safety, interpret the area, and meet basic visitor needs. The proposed OHV action (limiting the entire Planning Area to existing roads), the camping restrictions and the firewood-gathering ban will require the publication of Federal Register notices, additional signing, public education and increased law enforcement presence. The re-construction of a portion of the footpath systems to accessible standards at the Needles and Anticline Overlooks will require the expenditure of construction funds, as will the disabled picnic sites at the Needles Overlook. The creation of a delineated parking lot at Looking Glass Rock will require labor and equipment in order to implement the action.

The implementation plan strategy calls for Federal Register publication, signing, public education and law enforcement presence to begin immediately upon the approval of the plan. That is, the OHV, camping and firewood restrictions can be implemented at once. The re-construction of the footpaths and the picnic site accessible to disabled persons will commence when funds are available, as will the improvements at Looking Glass Rock.

B. Cost Estimate Summary and Development Sequence Phase III Actions

Note: These estimates are based on costs for FY01. Actual expenditures may be higher depending on inflation and actual date of implementation.

OHV Designation of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area	
4 bulletin boards	\$1000
Signs/educational materials	\$5000
Firewood Restrictions	
Signing/educational materials	\$1500
Camping Restrictions	
Signing /educational materials	\$2500
Needles Overlook footpaths and picnic tables	\$50,000
Anticline Overlook footpaths	\$30,000
Looking Glass Rock parking lot delineation	\$ 5,000
Interpretive Exhibits (\$5,000/site); 5 sites	\$25,000

V. BLM STAFF INVOLVED IN PREPARATION OF THE CANYON RIMS RECREATION AREA PLAN

BLM participants in the development and analysis of this plan included the following staff from the Moab Field Office.

:

Ann Marie Aubry, Watershed Specialist

Raymon Carling, Natural Resource Specialist

Jean Carson, Computer Assistant

Joe Cresto, Wildlife Biologist

Stephanie Ellingham, Riparian

Katie Stevens, Recreation Technician

Rob Sweeten, Landscape Architect

Daryl Trotter, Environmental Protection Specialist

Alex VanHemert, Outdoor Recreation Planner

Mary von Koch, Realty Specialist

Russ von Koch, Recreation Resource Advisor

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Facilities Maintenance Management System

A Bureau-wide approach which provides a plan for inventory, facility maintenance and site operation

Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV)

Any motorized vehicle capable of or designed for travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain, excluding any emergency vehicles and vehicles in official use.

Public lands

Any land and interest in land managed by the US government and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management.

Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP).

An officially approved document for a specific geographical area of public land which identifies the management actions to be implemented to achieve recreation-related decisions made in a resource management plan.

Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

A conceptual planning tool which recognizes that there are three types of settings (physical, social and managerial) which influence the type of recreational experience opportunities that can be provided on public lands. ROS is subdivided into six classes which cover the full spectrum of experience opportunities from pristine environments to highly developed manmade environments. ROS Classes are described in BLM manual H-8310-1 (Recreation Inventory).

Resource Management Plan (RMP)

A written land use plan that outlines BLM's decisions and strategies for management of the resources in a particular area.

State School Trust Lands

Federal lands ceded to the state of Utah and managed by the School Institutional and Trust Lands Administration (SITLA). Revenues from these lands are used for the benefit of schools within the state.

VRM

Visual Resource Management. Visual Resource Management Classes are defined as the degree of alteration that is acceptable within the characteristic landscape. Visual inventories are conducted to identify the sensitivity of the visual resource.

Wilderness Inventory Area

An area inventoried under the authority of Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act that has been determined to possess the wilderness characteristics defined in the Wilderness Act of 1964.